DEVOUT EXERCISES

OF THE

HEART,

IN

MEDITATION AND SOLILOQUY, PRAYER AND PRAISE.

BY THE LATE PIOUS AND INGENIOUS

Mrs. ROWE.

REVIEWED AND PUBLISHED, AT HER REQUEST, BY

I. WATTS, *D. D.*

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TO

* * * * * * *

An intimate FRIEND of Mrs. ROWE.

MADAM,

IF theſe pious Meditations of ſo ſublime a genius ſhould be inſcribed to any name, there is none but your's muſt have ſtood in the front of them. That long and conſtant intimacy of friendſhip with which you delighted to honour her, that high eſteem and veneration you are pleaſed to pay her memory, and the ſacred likeneſs and ſympathy between two kindred ſouls, abſolutely determine where this reſpect ſhould be paid.

Beſides, Madam, you well know, that ſome copies out of theſe papers have

been your own ſeveral years by the gift of the deceaſed; and the favour you have done me lately by your permiſſion to peruſe them, has aſſiſted the correction of theſe Manuſcripts, and would add another reaſon to ſupport this inſcription of them, if your fear of aſſuming too much honour could but have admitted this piece of juſtice.

I know, Madam, your tenderneſs and indulgence to every thing Mrs. Rowe has written, cannot with-hold your judgment from ſuſpecting ſome of her expreſſions to be a little too rapturous, and too near a-kin to the language of the myſtical writers, yet your piety and candour will take no ſuch offence as to prevent your beſt improvement by them in all that is divine and holy; and may your retired hours find ſuch happy aſſiſtances and elevations hereby, that you may commence the joys of angels and of bleſſed ſpirits before-hand.

And when your valuable life has been long extended amidſt all the temporal bleſſings

bleſſings you enjoy, and the Chriſtian virtues you practiſe, may you, at the call of God, find a gentle diſmiſſion from mortality, and aſcend on high to meet your deceaſed friend in Paradiſe. Nor can I ſuppoſe that any of the inhabitants of that bliſsful region will ſooner recognize your glorified ſpirit, or will ſalute your firſt appearance there with a more tender ſenſe of mutual ſatisfaction. There may you join with your beloved Philomela, in paying celeſtial worſhip in exalted and unknown forms, to her God, and your God; and may the harmony of the place be aſſiſted by your united ſongs to Jeſus, your common Saviour!

I am, Madam, with great ſincerity and eſteem,

Your moſt faithful,

and obedient ſervant,

NEWINGTON,
Sept. 29. 1737.

I. WATTS

THE

PREFACE.

THE admirable author of theſe devotional papers has been in high eſteem among the ingenious and polite, ſince ſo many excellent fruits of her pen, both in verſe and proſe, have appeared in public. She was early honoured under the feigned name of Philomela, before the world was allowed to know Mrs Eliſabeth Singer, by the name drawn from her family, or that of Mrs. Rowe, which ſhe acquired by marriage.

Though many of her writings that were publiſhed in her life-time diſcover a pious and heavenly temper, and a warm zeal for religion and virtue; yet ſhe choſe to conceal the devotions of her heart till ſhe was got beyond the cenſure and the applauſe of mortals. 'Twas enough that God, whom ſhe loved with ardent and ſupreme affection, was witneſs to all her ſecret and immenſe breathings after him.

In February laſt he was pleaſed to call her out of our world, and take her to himſelf. Some time

time after her deceaſe theſe manuſcripts were tranſmitted to me, all incloſed in one ſheet of paper, and directed to me at Newington, by her own hand. In the midſt of them I found her letter, which intreated me to review them, and commit them to the preſs. This letter I have thought neceſſary to ſhew the world, not ſo much to diſcover my right to publiſh theſe papers, as to let the reader ſee ſomething more of that holy and heavenly character which ſhe maintained in an uniform manner both in life and death.

'Tis now almoſt thirty years ſince I was honoured with her acquaintance, nor could her great modeſty conceal all her ſhining graces and accompliſhments; but it is not my province to give a particular account of this excellent woman, who has bleſſed and adorned our nation and our age. I expect her temper, her conduct, and her virtues will be ſet in a juſt and pleaſing light among the memoirs of her life, by ſome near relations, to whom the care of her poetical pieces, and her familiar letters is committed.

Theſe Devout Exerciſes are animated with ſuch fire, as ſeems to ſpeak the language of holy paſſion, and diſcovers them to be the dictates of her heart; and thoſe who were favoured with her chief intimacy will moſt readily believe it. The ſtyle, I confeſs, is raiſed above that of

common meditation or ſoliloquy; but let it be remembered ſhe was no common Chriſtian. As her virtues were ſublime, ſo her genius was bright and ſparkling, and the vivacity of her imagination had a tincture of the muſe almoſt from her childhood. This made it natural for her to expreſs the inward ſentiments of her ſoul in more exalted language, and to paint her own ideas in metaphor and rapture, near a-kin to the diction of poeſy.

The reader will here find a ſpirit dwelling in fleſh, elevated into divine tranſports, congenial to thoſe of angels and unbodied minds. Her intenſe love to her God kindles at every hint, and tranſcends the limits of mortality. I ſcarce ever met with any devotional writings which gives us an example of a ſoul, at ſpecial ſeaſons, ſo far raiſed above every thing that is not immortal and divine.

Yet ſhe is conſcious of her frailties too: ſhe ſometimes confeſſes her folly and her guilt in the ſight of God, in the moſt affecting language of a deep humiliation. 'Tis with a pathetic ſenſibility of her weakneſs, and in the ſtrongeſt language of ſelf-diſplicency, ſhe bewails her offences againſt her Creator and Redeemer; and in her intervals of darkneſs, ſhe vents her painful complaints and mournings for the abſence of her higheſt and beſt beloved.

Let

Let it be obſerved, that it was much the faſhion, even among ſome divines of eminence in former years, to expreſs the fervours of devout love to our Saviour in the ſtyle of the Song of Solomon: and I muſt confeſs that ſeveral of my compoſures in verſe, written in younger life, were led by theſe examples unwarily into this tract. But if I may be permitted to ſpeak the ſenſe of mature age, I can hardly think this the happieſt language in which Chriſtians ſhould generally diſcover their warm ſentiments of religion, ſince the clearer and more ſpiritual revelation of the New Teſtament. Yet ſtill it muſt be owned, there are ſome ſouls favoured with ſuch beautifying viſits from heaven, and raptured with ſuch a flame of divine affection, as more powerfully engages all animal nature in their devotions, and conſtrains them to ſpeak their pureſt and moſt ſpiritual exerciſes in ſuch pathetic and tender expreſſions as may be perverſely prophaned by an unholy conſtruction. And the byaſs and propenſity towards this ſtyle is yet ſtronger, where early impreſſions of piety have been made on the heart by devout writings of this kind.

It ſhould be remembered alſo, there is nothing to be found here which ariſes above our ideas; here are none of thoſe abſurd and incomprehenſible phraſes which amuſe the ear with ſounding vanity, and hold reaſon in ſovereign contempt: here are no viſionary ſcenes of wild

extravagance, no affectations of the tumid and unmeaning ſtyle, which ſpreads a glaring confuſion over the underſtanding; nothing that leads the reader into the region of thoſe myſtical ſhadows and darkneſs which abound in the Romiſh writers, under the pretence of refined light and ſublime extacy. Nor is the character of this ingenious author to be blemiſhed with any other reproaches which have been ſometimes caſt on ſuch ſort of meditations.

I know it hath been ſaid, that this language of rapture addreſſed to the Deity, is but a new track given to the flow of the ſofter powers, after the diſappointment of ſome meaner love; or, at leaſt, 'tis owing to the want of a proper object and opportunity to fix thoſe tender paſſions: but this cannot be allowed to be the caſe here; for as Mrs. Rowe had been ſought early by ſeveral lovers, ſo ſhe ſpent ſeveral years of younger life in the connubial ſtate with a gentleman of ſuch accompliſhments and ſuch circumſtances, that he was well fitted to be a partner of her joys and cares.

I know alſo that this ſoft and paſſionate turn of religious meditation has ſometimes been imputed to injuries and ill-treatment in the marriage-ſtate, whereby the ſame affections are weaned from an undeſerving object, and poured out in amorous language upon an object ſupremely

premely worthy and divine. But neither has this reproach any pretence in the preſent caſe; that happy pair had ſouls ſo near a-kin to each other, that they perſevered in uncommon amity, and mutual ſatisfaction ſo long as providence favoured him with life. 'Tis ſufficiently evident then, that in theſe meditations there is no ſecret panting after a mortal love in the language of devotion and piety.

Nor yet can it be objected, that it was diſplicence and peeviſhneſs toward other things round about her, that taught her to expreſs herſelf with ſuch contempt of the things of mortality, and all the gay and tempting ſcenes of the preſent ſtate: ſhe was by no means ſour and moroſe, and out of humour with the world, nor with her acquaintance that dwelt in it: ſhe often converſed freely with the gay and the great, and was in high eſteem among perſons of rank and honour. But honour and rank among mortals, with all the ſcenes of gaiety and greatneſs, were little, deſpicable, and forgotten things, while in her devout moments, her eyes and her heart were fixed on God, the ſupreme original of all excellency and all honour.

In common life ſhe was affable and friendly with perſons of every rank and degree: and in her latter years, as ſhe drew nearer to heaven, if ſhe avoided any thing, it was grandeur and

public appearance on earth. But ſhe never concealed and abſtracted herſelf from the ſociety of any of her fellow-creatures ſo as to deſpiſe the meaneſt of her ſpecies, ſhe was ever kind and compaſſionate to the diſtreſſed, and largely liberal to the indigent. Nor did ſhe neglect the daily duties of human life, under a vain imagination that ſhe moved in a higher ſphere, and was ſeraphically exalted above them.

In ſhort, there are nothing in theſe papers that can juſtly ſupport any ſuch ſort of cenſures, tho' men of corrupt minds may cover the bible itſelf with ſlander and ridicule. Let all ſuch readers ſtand aloof, nor touch theſe ſacred leaves, leſt they pollute them.

Tho' there is not one compleat copy of verſes amongſt all theſe tranſports of her ſoul, yet ſhe ever carried with her a reliſh of poeſy even in her ſacred retirements. Sometimes ſhe ſprings her flight from a line or two of verſes, which her memory had impreſſed upon her heart: ſometimes from the midſt of her religious elevations ſhe lights down upon a few lines of ſome modern poet, even Herbert as well as Milton, &c. altho' it is but ſeldom ſhe cites their names. At other times the verſes ſeem to be the effuſion of her own rapturous thoughts in ſudden melody and metre; or at leaſt I know not whence the lines are copied: but ſhe moſt frequently does me the honour

honour to make uſe of ſome of my writings in verſe in theſe holy meditations of her heart. Bleſſed be that God, who has ſo far favoured any thing my pen could produce, as to aſſiſt ſo ſublime a devotion.

From the different appearances of the paper and ink in ſome of theſe pieces, as well as from the early tranſcripts of ſeveral of them among her friends, 'tis evident they were written in her younger days; others are of a much later original, though there is but one that bears a date, and that is April 30, 1735. They ſeem to have been penned at ſpecial ſeaſons and occaſions throughout the courſe of her life. A few of them bear the corrections or additions of her own pen, which diſcovers itſelf by a little difference of the hand-writing.

Though ſhe was never tempted away from our common Chriſtianity into the faſhionable apoſtacies of the age, yet I am well informed from many hands, that in her latter years, ſhe entered with more zeal and affection into ſome of the peculiar doctrines of the goſpel: and it is evident that ſome of theſe devotional pieces have a more evangelical turn than others, and probably moſt of theſe were compoſed or corrected in the latter part of life. The oppoſition which has of late been made to ſome of theſe truths, gave occaſion to her further ſearch into them, and her zeal for

for them. However, I have placed theſe papers all as I found them pinned up in a wrapping-paper, though it is evident, from plain circumſtances, this is not the order in which they were written in, nor is that of any great importance.

Though theſe writings give us the aſpirations of a devout ſoul in her holy retirements, when ſhe had no deſign to preſent the public with them; yet they did not want a great deal of adjuſtment or corrections, in order to ſee the light. The numbers and the titles are added by the publiſher, as well as the breaks and pauſes, which give a ſort of reſt to the reader's mind, and make the review more eaſy. Here and there a too venturous flight is a little moderated; ſometimes a meditation or a ſentence is compleated, which ſeemed very imperfect, or a ſhort line or two inſerted to introduce the ſenſe where the language ſeemed too abrupt, or the meaning too obſcure. Her ſoul had a large ſet of ideas in preſent view, which made every expreſſion ſhe uſed eaſy and perſpicuous to herſelf when ſhe wrote only for her own uſe; though ſometimes her entire ſenſe might not be quite ſo obvious to every reader, without a little introduction into her track of ſentiments. Upon the whole, I muſt acknowledge, I was very unwilling that this excellent work ſhould loſe any degrees of elegance or brightneſs, by paſſing through my hands.

When

When the manuſcript came under my reviſal, I read it over with the eye of a critic and a friend, that I might publiſh it with honour to the hand that wrote it, and with religious entertainment, and advantage to the world: nor was this employment deſtitute of its proper ſatisfaction. But never did I feel the true pleaſure of theſe meditations, till I had finiſhed this labour of the head, and began to read them over again, as "Devout "Exercíſes of the Heart:" then I endeavoured to enter more entirely into the ſpirit of the pious author, and attempted to aſſume her language as my own. But how much ſuperior was the ſatisfaction which I received from this review, eſpecially whereſoever I had reaſon to hope I could pronounce her words with ſincerity of ſoul? How happily did this raiſe and entertain all my pleaſing paſſions, and give me another ſort of delight, than any dry critical peruſal of them, in order to judge concerning their propriety? But I confeſs alſo, it was an abaſing and mortifying thought, when I found how often I was conſtrained to drop the ſublime expreſſion from my lips, or forbid my tongue to uſe it, becauſe my own attainments ſunk ſo far beneath theſe ſacred elevations of ſpirit, and fell ſo far ſhort of thoſe tranſcendent degrees of divine affection and zeal.

Let me perſuade all that peruſe this book to make the ſame experiment that I have done; and

and when they have ſhut out the world, and are reading in their retirements, let them try how far they can ſpeak this language, and aſſume theſe ſentiments as their own: and by aſpiring to follow them, may they find the ſame ſatisfaction and delight, or at leaſt learn the profitable leſſons of ſelf-abaſement and holy ſhame: and may a noble and glorious ambition excite in their breaſts a ſacred zeal to emulate ſo illuſtrious an example. Whatſoever ardors of divine love have been kindled in a ſoul united to fleſh and blood, may alſo be kindled by the ſame influences of grace in other ſpirits, labouring under the ſame clogs and impediments.

But perhaps it will be neceſſary here to give a caution to ſome humble Chriſtians, that they would not make theſe higher elevations of piety and holy joy the teſt and ſtandard by which to judge of the ſincerity of their own religion. Ten thouſand ſaints are arrived ſafe at Paradiſe, who have not been favoured like St. Paul, with a rapture into the third heaven, nor could ever ariſe to the affectionate tranſports and devout joys of Mrs. Rowe; yet I hope all ſerious readers may find ſomething here, which, through the aids of the bleſſed Spirit, may raiſe them above their uſual pitch, may give a new ſpring to their religious pleaſures, and their immortal hopes, and thereby render their lives more holy and heavenly.

That

That the publication of this little book may be favoured with the divine bleſſing for this happy end, is the ſincere deſire and requeſt of the publiſher, as it was the real motive of the ingenious and pious writer to commit them, by my hand, to the public view. This ſufficiently diſcovers itſelf in the following letter.

To

TO THE REVEREND

DR. WATTS,

AT NEWINGTON.

SIR,

THE opinion I have of your piety and judgment is the reaſon of my giving you the trouble of looking over theſe papers, in order to publiſh them; which I deſire you to do as ſoon as you can conveniently; only you have full liberty to ſuppreſs what you think proper.

I think there can be no vanity in this deſign, for I am ſenſible ſuch thoughts as theſe will not be for the taſte of the modiſh part of the world; and before they appear, I ſhall be entirely diſintereſted in the cenſure or applauſe of mortals.

The reflections were occaſionally written, and only for my own improvement; but I am not without hopes that they may have the ſame effect on ſome pious minds, as the reading the experience of others has had on my ſoul. The experimental part of religion has generally a greater

er influence than its theory; and if, when I am ſleeping in the duſt, theſe ſoliloquies ſhould kindle a flame of divine love in the heart of the loweſt and moſt deſpiſed Chriſtian, be the glory given to the great Spring of all grace and benignity.

I have now done with mortal things, and all to come is vaſt eternity——Eternity——How tranſporting is the ſound! as long as God exiſts, my being and happineſs is ſecure. Theſe unbounded deſires, which the wide creation cannot limit, ſhall be ſatisfied for ever. I ſhall drink at the fountain-head of pleaſure, and be refreſhed with the emanations of original life and joy. I ſhall hear the voice of uncreated harmony ſpeaking peace and ineffable conſolation to my ſoul.

I expect eternal life, not as a reward (of merit) but a pure act of bounty. Deteſting myſelf in every view I can take, I fly to the righteouſneſs and atonement of my great Redeemer for pardon and ſalvation; this is my only conſolation and hope. "Enter not into judgment, O Lord, "with thy ſervant; for in thy ſight ſhall no "fleſh be juſtified."

Through the blood of the Lamb, I hope for an entire victory over the laſt enemy: and that before this comes to you, I ſhall have reached the celeſtial

celeſtial heights: and while you are reading theſe lines, I ſhall be adoring before the throne of God, where faith ſhall be turned into viſion, and theſe languiſhing deſires ſatisfied with the full fruition of immortal love. Adieu.

ELIZ. ROWE.

CON-

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DE-

DEVOUT EXERCISES

OF THE

HEART, &c.

I. *Supreme Love to GOD.*

WHY, O my God, muſt this mortal ſtructure put ſo great a ſeparation between my ſoul and thee? I am ſurrounded with thy eſſence, yet I cannot perceive thee; I follow thee, and trace thy footſteps in heaven and earth, yet I cannot overtake thee: thou art before me, and I cannot reach thee: and behind me, and I perceive thee not.

O thou, whom unſeen, I love, by what powerful influence doſt thou attract my ſoul? The eye has not ſeen, nor the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive what thou art; and yet I love thee beyond all that mine eye has ſeen, or my ear heard, beyond all that my

heart can comprehend. Thou dwelleſt in the heights of glory, to which no human thought can ſoar, and yet thou art more near and intimate to my ſoul than any of the objects of ſenſe. Theſe ears have never heard thy voice, and yet I am better acquainted with thee, and can rely on thee with more confidence, than on the deareſt friend I have on earth.

My heart cleaves to thee, O Lord, as its only refuge, and finds in thee a ſecret and conſtant ſpring of conſolation. I ſpeak to thee with the utmoſt confidence, and think thy being my greateſt happineſs. The reflection on thy exiſtence and greatneſs recreates my ſpirits, and fills my heart with alacrity; my ſoul overflows with pleaſure, I rejoice, I triumph in thy independent bleſſedneſs, and abſolute dominion. Reign, O my God, for ever, glorious and uncontrouled.

I, a worm of the earth, would join my aſſent with the infinite orders above, with all thy flaming miniſters who rejoice in thy kingdom and glory.

Though not to them thy happier race, allow'd
To view the bright unveil'd Divinity;
(By no audacious glance from mortal eyes,
Thoſe myſtic glories are to be profan'd)
Yet yet I feel the ſame immortal flame,
And love thee, though unſeen.

I love thee——Thus far I can ſpeak, but all the

the reſt is unutterable: and I muſt leave the pleaſing tale untold till I can talk in the language of immortality; and then I'll begin the tranſporting ſtory, which ſhall never come to an end, but be ſtill and ſtill beginning: for thy beauties, O thou faireſt of ten thouſand, will ſtill be new, and ſhall kindle freſh ardour in my ſoul to all eternity. The ſacred flame ſhall riſe, nor find any limits till thy perfections find a period.

I love thee, and, O thou that knoweſt all things, read the characters that love has drawn on my heart: what excellence but thine in heaven and earth could raiſe ſuch aſpirations of ſoul, ſuch ſublime and fervent affections as thoſe I feel? What could fix my ſpirits but boundleſs perfection? what is there elſe for whoſe ſake I could deſpiſe all created glory? Why am I not at reſt here among ſenſible enjoyments? Whence ariſe theſe importunate longings, theſe infinite deſires? Why does not the compleat creation ſatisfy, or at leaſt delude me with a dream of happineſs? Why do not the objects of ſenſe awake a more ardent ſentiment than things diſtant and inviſible? Why ſhould I, who "ſay to corruption, "thou art my father," aſpire after an union with the immenſe Divinity?

You angels of God, that behold his face, explain to me the ſacred myſtery; tell me how this heavenly flame began, unriddle its wondrous generation: who hath animated this mortal frame with celeſtial fire, and given a clod of earth this

divine ambition? What could kindle it but the breath of God, which kindled up my ſoul? and to thee its amiable original, it aſcends; it breaks through all created perfection, and keeps on its reſtleſs courſe to the firſt pattern of beauty.

Ye flowery varieties of the earth, and you ſparkling glories of the ſkies, your blandiſhments are vain, while I purſue an excellence that caſts a reproach on all your glory. I would fain cloſe my eyes on all the various and lovely appearances you preſent, and would open them on a brighter ſcene. I have deſires which nothing viſible can gratify: to which no material things are ſuitable. O when ſhall I find objects more intirely agreeable to my intellectual faculties? My ſoul ſprings forward in purſuit of a diſtant good, whom I follow by ſome faint ray of light, which only glimmers by ſhort intervals before me. Oh when will it diſperſe the clouds, and break out in full ſplendor on my ſoul?

But what will the open viſion of thy beauties effect, if while thou art but faintly imagined, I love thee with ſuch a ſacred fervour? To what bleſſed heights ſhall my admiration riſe, when I ſhall behold thee in full perfection; when I ſhall ſee thee as thou art exalted in majeſty, and compleat in beauty? How ſhall I triumph then in thy glory, and in the privileges of my own being? What ineffable thoughts will ariſe to find myſelf united to the all-ſufficient Divinity, by ties which the ſons of men have no means to expreſs,

preſs, by an engagement that the revolution of eternal years ſhall not diſſolve? The league of nature ſhall be broken, and the laws of the mingled elements be cancelled; but my relation to the almighty God ſhall ſtand fixed and unchangeable as his own exiſtence: "Nor life, nor death, "nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, "nor things preſent, nor things to come, ſhall "ever ſeparate me from his love."

Triumph, O my ſoul, and rejoice; look forward beyond the period of all terreſtrial things: look beyond ten thouſand ages of celeſtial bleſſedneſs, look forward ſtill, and take an immeaſurable proſpect; preſs on and leave unnumbered ages behind, ages of ineffable peace and pleaſure; plunge at once into the ocean of bliſs, and call eternity itſelf thy own.

There are no limits to the proſpect of my joy; it runs parallel with the duration of the infinite Divinity: my bliſs is without bounds: O when ſhall the full poſſeſſion of it commence?

II. *The truth and goodneſs of GOD.*

ENGRAV'D as in eternal braſs,
The mighty promiſe ſhines;
Nor can the pow'rs of darkneſs raze
Thoſe everlaſting lines.
The ſacred word of grace is ſtrong
As that which built the ſkies;

The voice that rolls the ſtars along
Speaks all the promiſes.

And they all are built on the immutable truth and goodneſs of thy nature: thou doſt not ſpeak at random like vain man; but whatever thou haſt engaged to perform, is the reſult of eternal counſel and deſign. Thou haſt uttered nothing that thou canſt ſee occaſion to alter on a ſecond review: thou canſt promiſe nothing to thy own damage, nor be a loſer by the utmoſt liberality. Thou art every way qualified to make good thy engagements, by the fulneſs of thy riches and power.

Nor haſt thou any neceſſity to flatter thy creatures, or to ſay kinder things to them than thou meaneſt to fulfil. Miſerable man can bring no advantage to thee, nor has he any thing to claim from thee. By what benefit has he prevented thee? By what right can he demand the leaſt of thy favours? Thy engagements are all free and unconſtrained, founded on thy own beneficence, and not on the merits of thy creature. While I conſider this, my expectations riſe, I ſet no limits to my hopes: I look up with confidence, and call thee *my Father*, and with a humble faith, I claim every advantage that tender name imports. My heart confides in thee with ſtedfaſtneſs and alacrity; fear and diſtruſt are inconſiſtent with my thoughts of the beneficence of thy nature.

Every name and attribute by which thou haſt revealed

revealed thyself to man confirms my faith. Thy life, thy being is engaged: I may as well question thy existence, as thy faithfulness: as sure as thou art, thou art just and true. The protestations of the most faithful friend I have, cannot give me half the consolation that thy promises give me. I hear vain man with diffidence, I bid my soul beware of trusting false mortality; but I hear thy voice with joy and full assurance.

Thy words are not writ in sand, nor scattered by the fleeting wind; but shall stand in force when heaven and earth shall be no more. Eternal ages shall not diminish their efficacy, nor alter what the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. I believe, I believe with the most perfect assent: I know that "thou art, and that thou art a re-"warder of them that diligently seek thee:" I feel the evidence, for thou hast not left thyself without a witness on my heart.

III. *Longing after the enjoyments of GOD.*

MY God, to thee my sighs ascend, every complaint I make, ends with thy name; I pause, I dwell on the sound, I speak it over again, and find that all my cares begin and end in thee. I long to behold the supreme beauty, I pant for the fair original of all that is lovely, for beauty that is yet unknown, and for intellectual pleasure yet untasted.

My heart aſpires, my wiſhes fly beyond the bounds of creation, and deſpiſe all that mortality can preſent me with. I was formed for celeſtial joys, and find myſelf capable of the entertainments of angels. Why may I not begin my heaven below, and taſte at leaſt of the ſprings of pleaſure that flow from thy right-hand for ever?

Should I drink my fill, thoſe fountains are ſtill exhauſtleſs: millions of happy ſouls quench their infinite deſires there: millions of happy orders of beings gaze on thy beauty, and are made partakers of thy bleſſedneſs: but thou art ſtill undiminiſhed. No liberality can waſte the ſtore of thy perfection; it has flowed from eternity, and runs for ever freſh, and why muſt I periſh for want?

My thirſty ſoul pines for the water of life: Oh! who will refreſh me with the pleaſurable draught? How long ſhall I wander in this deſart land, where every proſpect is waſte and barren? I look round me in vain, and ſigh ſtill unſatisfied: Oh! who will lead me to the ſtill waters, and make me repoſe in green paſtures, where the weary are for ever at reſt? How tedious are the hours of expectation!

Come, Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is ſick,
While thou doſt ever, ever ſtay;
Thy long deferring wounds me to the quick,
My ſpirit gaſpeth night and day:

O ſhew

O ſhew thyſelf to me,
Or take me up to thee.

Diſpatch thy commiſſions; give me my work, and activity to perform it, and let me as a hireling fulfil my day. Lord, it is enough: "What "am I better than my fathers?" they are dead, and I am mortal.

I'm but a ſtranger and a pilgrim here
In theſe wild regions wand'ring and forlorn;
Reſtleſs and ſighing for my native home,
Longing to reach my weary ſpace of life,
And to fulfil my taſk. Oh! haſte the hour
Of joy and ſweet repoſe. Tranſporting hope!

Lord, here I am waiting for thy commands, attending thy pleaſure; O ſpeak and incline my ear to hear; give me my work, let me finiſh it, and gain my diſmiſſion from this body of ſin and death; this hated clog of error and guilt, of corruption and vanity. Oh! let me drop this load, and bid theſe ſcenes of guilt a final adieu.

"I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord;" when wilt thou let me into thy holy habitation? How long ſhall I pine at this diſtance from thee? What can I ſpeak to ſhew thee my pain, to utter my anguiſh, when I fear the loſs of my God? Oh! ſpeak an aſſuring word, and confirm my hope.

Transporting moment! when wilt thou appear,
To crown my hopes and banish all my fear?

Again, O my Father, and my eternal Friend, I breathe out my requests to thee in this land of fatigue and folly! What is this life but a sorry tiresome round, a circle of repeated vanities? Happiness has never been seen in it since sin and folly entered; all is empty appearance or vain labour, or painful vexation.

Suffic'd with life, my languid spirits faint,
And fain would be at rest. Oh! let me enter
Those sacred seats, and after all the toil
Of life, begin an everlasting sabbath.

Yet again, O Lord, I ask leave to tell thee, I have "waited for thy salvation," and hourly languished after the habitations of my God. My heart grows sick, and I almost expire under these delays. What have I here to keep me from thee? What to relieve the tedious hours of absence? I have pronounced all below the sun, vanity and vexation; all insipid and burdensome. Amidst health and plenty, friends and reputation, thou art my only joy, my highest wish, and my supreme delight. On thee my soul fixes all her hopes; there I rest in a celestial calm! Oh! let it not be broken with earthly objects: let me live unmolested with the cares or delights of sense.

Oh!

——————————Oh! let me flee
From all the world, and live alone to thee.

IV. *GOD my ſupreme, and my only hope.*

WHY do I addreſs thee, my God, with no more confidence? Why do I indulge theſe remains of unbelief, and harbour theſe returns of infidelity and diſtruſt? Can I ſurvey the earth, can I gaze on the ſtructure of the heavens, and ask if thou art able to deliver? Can I call in queſtion thy ability to ſuccour me, when I conſider the general and particular inſtances of thy goodneſs and power? One age to another, in long ſucceſſion, hath conveyed the records of thy glory; "In all generations thou haſt been "our dwelling-place, my fathers truſted in thee, "and were delivered." They have encouraged me, my own experience has encouraged me to truſt in thee for ever.

The ſun may fail to riſe, and men in vain expect its light; but thy truth, thy faithfulneſs cannot fail: the courſe of nature may be reverſed, and all be chaos again; but thou art immutable, and canſt not by any change deceive the hopes of them that truſt in thee. I adore thy power, and ſubſcribe to thy goodneſs and fidelity, and what farther objection would my unbelief raiſe? Is any thing too hard for God to accompliſh? Can the united force of earth and hell reſiſt his will?

Great God, how wide thy glories shine!
How broad thy kingdom, how divine!
Nature, and miracles, and fate, and chance are thine.

Therefore I apply myself immediately to thee, and renounce all the terror and all the confidence that may arise from heaven or earth besides.

Not from the dust my joys or sorrows spring:
Let all the baleful planets shed
Their mingled curses round my head;
Their mingled curses I despise,
Let but the great, th' eternal king,
Look thro' the clouds, and bless me with his eyes.

Let him bless me, and I shall be blessed; blessed without reserve or limitation; blessed in my going out, and coming in; in my sitting down and rising up; blessed in time, and blessed to all eternity. That blessing from thy lips will influence the whole creation, and attend me where-ever I am. It shall go before me as a leading light, and follow me as my protecting angel. When I lie down it will cover me, I shall rest beneath the shadow of the Most High, and dwell safely in the secrets of his tabernacle.

Thy kingdom ruleth over all, O Lord, and thou "dost according to thy will in the armies of "heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth:" I confess and acknowledge thy providence.

The

The ways of man are not at his own disposal, but all his goings are ordered by thee: all events are in thy hands, and thou only canst succeed or disappoint his hopes. If thou blow on his designs, they are for ever blasted; if thou bless them, neither earth nor hell can hinder their success: therefore I apply myself immediately to thee; for not all created power can assist me without thee.

Hence from my heart, ye idols, flee,
Ye sounding names of vanity!
No more my tongue shall sacrifice
To chance and nature, tales and lies.
Creatures without a God, can yield me no supplies.

Not all the power of men on earth, nor angel nor saint in heaven, can hold or relieve me in the least exigence, if my God hide himself and stand afar off from me. Second causes are all at thy direction, and cannot aid me till commissioned by thee.

Lord, when my thoughtful soul surveys
Fire, air and earth, and stars and seas,
I call them all thy slaves;
Commission'd by my father's will,
Poison shall cure, and balms shall kill;
Vernal suns or zephyrs breath
May burn or blast the plants to death
That sharp *December* saves.

What

What can winds or planets boaſt;
But a precarious power?
The ſun is all in darkneſs loſt;
Froſt ſhall be fire, and fire be froſt,
When he appoints the hour.

At thy command nature and neceſſity are no more; all things are alike eaſy to God; ſpeak thou but the word, and my deſires are granted; ſay, "Let there be light," and there ſhall be light. Thou canſt look me into peace, when the tumults of thought raiſe a ſtorm within. Bid my ſoul be ſtill and all its tempeſt ſhall obey thee.

I depend only on thee; do thou ſmile, and all the world may frown; do thou ſucceed my affairs, and I ſhall fear no obſtacle that earth or hell can put in my way. Thou only art the object of my fear, and all my deſires are directed to thee.

Human things have loſt their being and their names, and vaniſh into nothing before thee; they are but ſhades and diſguiſes to veil the active divinity. Oh! let me break through all theſe ſeparations, and ſee and confeſs the great, the governing cauſe. Let no appearance of created things, however ſpecious, hide thee from my view; let me look through all to thee, nor caſt a glance of love or hope below thee. With a holy contempt let me ſurvey the ample round of the creation, as lying in the hollow of thy hand,

hand, and every being in heaven and on earth as unmoveable by the moſt potent cauſe in nature, till commiſſioned by thee to do good or hurt. Oh! let thy hand be with me to keep me from evil, and let me abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty; I ſhall be ſecure in thy pavilion. To thee I fly for ſhelter from all the ills of mortality.

V. *GOD a preſent help and ever near.*

THOU waſt found of me, O my God, when I ſought thee not, and wilt thou fly me when I ſeek thee? Am I giving my breath to the wind, and ſcattering my petitions in the air? Is it a vain thing to call upon God, and is there no profit in crying to the Almighty? "Art "thou a God afar off, and not near at hand?" Is there any place exempt from thy preſence? Any diſtance whence my cries cannot reach thee? Can any darkneſs hide me from thy eyes? or, is there a corner of the creation unviſited by thee? Doſt thou not fill heaven and earth, and am I not ſurrounded by thy immenſity?

Are my deſires unknown to thee? or is there any thought in my heart concealed from thee? Doſt not thou that haſt formed the ear, hear? Canſt thou forget the works of thine own hands? or retired far in the heavens, full of thine own happineſs, canſt thou leave thy creation to miſery and diſorder, helpleſs and hopeleſs? Are the ways of man at his own diſpoſal, and his

paths

paths undirected by thee? Is calling on the living God no more than worshipping a dumb idol? Canst thou, like them, disappoint and mock thy adorers?

Art thou unacquainted with the extent of thy own power, that thou shouldst promise beyond thy ability to perform? Or art thou "as a man "that thou shouldst lie, or the son of man that "thou shouldst repent?" Is thy faithfulness uncertain, and thy power, precarious? Are those perfections imaginary for which men adore thee, and thy gracious names insignificant titles? Do the "children of men in vain put their trust "under the shadow of thy wings?" Art not thou "a present help in time of trouble;" and is there no security in the secret places of the Most High? Whither then shall I look in my distress? To whom shall I direct my prayer? From whom shall I expect relief, if there is no help in God for me?

But, Oh! what unrighteousness have my fathers ever found in thee? What injustice can I charge thee with? What breach of truth, or want of pity? Have the records of thy actions ever been stained with the breach of faithfulness? Art thou not my only hope, and my long experienc'd support? Have I ever found help from the creatures when thou hast failed me? Have I, or can I have, a greater certainty than thy word to depend on? Can any other power defend or deliver like thee? Thou art "a rock, and thy

"works

" works are perfect, for all thy ways are judg-
" ment: a God of truth, and without iniquity,
" juſt and right art thou." With my laſt breath I will witneſs to thy truth and faithfulneſs, and declare thy goodneſs to the children of men.

VI. *GOD an all-ſufficient good, and my only happineſs.*

WHY is my heart ſo far from thee,
My God, my chief delight?
Why are my thoughts no more by day
With thee, no more by night?

Why ſhould my fooliſh paſſions rove?
Where can ſuch ſweetneſs be
As I have taſted in thy love,
As I have found in thee?

Where can I hope to meet ſuch joys as thy ſmiles have given me? Where can I find pleaſure ſo ſincere and unallayed? When I have enjoyed the light of thy countenance, and the ſenſe of thy love, has not all my ſoul been filled? Have I found any want or emptineſs? Has there been any room left for deſire; or any proſpect beyond, beſides the more perfect enjoyment of God? Have not all the glories of the world been darkened, and turned into blackneſs and deformity? How poor, how contemptible have they appeared? or rather have they not all diſappeared, and vaniſhed,

as

as dreams and ſhadows in the noon of day, and under the blaze of the ſun-beams.

I have never found ſatisfaction in any thing but in God; why then do I wander from him? Why do I leave the fountain of living waters for broken ciſterns? Why do I abandon the full ocean in ſearch of ſhallow ſtreams? What account can I give for folly like this? I can promiſe myſelf nothing from the creature: thoſe expectations ſhall deceive me no more. 'Tis thou, my God, thou art the only object of my hopes and deſires; 'tis thou only that canſt make me happy.

If thou frown, my being is a curſe: thy indignation is hell with all its terrors. Let me never feel that, and I defy all things elſe to make me miſerable. I ſeem independent on all nature, to thee only I apply myſelf. Hear me, thou beneficent Author of my being, thou ſupport of my life, to thee I direct my wiſhes, thoſe deſires which thou wilt approve, while I aſk but the happineſs I was created to enjoy. Oh! fix all my expectation on thee, and free me from this levity and inconſtancy.

Look gently down, almighty grace,
Priſon me round in thy embrace;
Pity the heart that would be thine,
And let thy power my love confine.

Suffer me never to ſtart from thee; ſuch a confinement were ſweeter than liberty; "thy yoke

"is

" is eaſy, and thy burden light." I ſhall bleſs the chain that binds me to thee. Oh! give me ſuch a view of thy beauty as ſhall fix my volatile heart for ever; ſuch a view as ſhall determine all its motions, and be a conſtant conviction how unreaſonable it is to wander from thee.

Is it that I reliſh any thing beyond thy love? Oh! no. I appeal even to thee, who canſt not be deceived, and knoweſt the inmoſt ſecrets of my ſoul: thou knoweſt where the balance of my love falls, and that my wanderings are not deliberate: that 'tis not by choice that I forſake thee. I grieve, I ſigh for my folly; ſhouldſt thou forgive me, I can never forgive myſelf, for I know 'tis inexcuſable.

I want nothing when I am poſſeſſed of thee; without thee I want all things. Thou art the centre of all my paſſions; I have no hope but what is thine, no joy but what flows from thee; my greateſt fears are thoſe of loſing thee; my utmoſt care is to ſecure thy favour. This is the ſubject of my deepeſt anxiety: every ſigh I breathe ends in thy name, and that loved name alone allays every anguiſh of my ſoul, and calms its wildeſt tempeſts.

From thy frowns or favour all my joys or ſorrows ſpring; thy frowns can make me infinitely miſerable, thy favour can make me infinitely bleſſed. I can defy hell, and ſmile in the face of death, whilſt I can call thee *mine*. My God! ſtill let me bleſs the ſound, and part with all things rather

ther than renounce my property in thee; let me hold it to my last breath, and claim it with my expiring sighs.

Secure of thee nothing can terrify my soul: all is peaceful and serene within; eternal love and immortal pleasure: I desire no more; imagination stops here, and all my wishes are lost in eternal plenty.—My God! more cannot be asked, and with less I should be infinitely miserable. The kingdoms of the skies should not buy my title to thee and thy love; the blessedness of all creatures is compleat here, for God himself is blessed in himself for ever.

What can I add? for all my words are faint,
Celestial love no eloquence can paint;
No more can be in mortal sounds expres'd,
But vast eternity shall tell the rest.

VII. *A Covenant with GOD.*

INcomprehensible Being, who "searchest the "heart, and triest the reins of the children "of men," thou knowest my sincerity, and my thoughts are all unveiled to thee; I am surrounded with thine immensity; thou art a present tho' invisible witness of the solemn affair I am now engaged in. I am now "taking hold of thy "strength, that I may make peace with thee," and entering into articles with the almighty God: these

theſe are the happy days long ſince predicted, when "one ſhall ſay I am the Lord's, and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of *Iſrael*, and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand to the Lord; and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my ſons and my daughters, ſaith the Lord *Jehovah*."

With the moſt thankful ſincerity I take hold on this covenant, as it is more fully manifeſted and explained in the goſpel by Jeſus Chriſt; and humbly accepting thy propoſals, I bind myſelf to thee by a ſacred and everlaſting obligation. By a free and deliberate action, I do here ratify the articles which were made for me in my baptiſm in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; I religiouſly devote myſelf to thy ſervice, and entirely ſubmit to thy conduct. I renounce the glories and vanities of the world, and chuſe thee as my happineſs, my ſupreme felicity and everlaſting portion. I make no article with thee for any thing beſides: deny or give me what thou wilt, I will never repine while my principal treaſure is ſecure. This is my deliberate, my free and ſincere determination; a determination, which, by thy grace, I will never retract.

Oh! thou, by whoſe power alone I ſhall be able to ſtand, "put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee;" let not the world with all its flatteries; nor death, nor hell, with all their terrors force me to violate this

this ſacred vow. Oh! let me never live to abandon thee, nor draw the impious breath that would deny thee.

And now let ſurrounding angels witneſs for me that I ſolemnly devote all the powers and faculties of my ſoul to thy ſervice; and when I preſumptuouſly employ any of the advantages thou haſt given me, to thy diſhonour, let them teſtify againſt me, and let my own words condemn me.

Eliſabeth Rowe.

Thus have I ſubſcribed to the gracious propoſals, and engaged myſelf to be the Lord's: and now let the malice of men, and the rage of devils, combine againſt me, I can defy all their ſtratagems; for God himſelf is become my friend, Jeſus is my all-ſufficient Saviour, and the *Spirit of God*, I truſt, will be my Sanctifier and my Comforter.

O happy day! tranſporting moment! the brighteſt period of my life! heaven with all its light ſmiles on thee: what glorious mortal can now excite my envy? what ſcene to tempt my ambition could the whole creation diſplay? Let glory call me with her exalted voice! Let pleaſure, with a ſofter eloquence, allure me! The world in all its ſplendor appears but a trifle, while the infinite God is my portion. He is mine by as ſure a title as eternal veracity can confer: the right is unqueſtionable, the conveyance unalterable,

able, the mountains shall be removed, and the hills be dissolved, before the everlasting obligation shall be cancelled.

VIII. *A thank-offering for saving grace.*

"BLESS the Lord, O my soul, and all that "is within me bless his holy name; bless "the Lord, and forget not all his benefits, who "redeemed thy life from destruction, and crown-"eth thee with loving-kindness, and tender mer-"cy;" who brought thee out of the mire and clay, and set thy feet upon a rock; who broke thy fetters, and freed thee from the miserable bondage of sin. I lay, a wretched slave, pleased with my chains, and fond of my captivity, fatally deluded and undone, till love, almighty love, rescued me. Blest effect of unmerited grace! I shall stand for ever an illustrious instance of boundless mercy: to that I must entirely ascribe my salvation, and through all the ages of eternity, I'll rehearse the wonders of redeeming love, and tell to listening angels what it has done for my soul.

I'll sing the endless miracles of love;
For ever that my lofty theme shall prove.

My glorious Creator, why did I employ thy thought before I had a being? Why from all eternity was an immortality designed me, and my birth

birth allotted me in a land illuminated with the rays of ſacred light? I might have been invoking the powers of hell with deteſtable ceremonies, inſtead of adoring the omnipotent God. But when thouſands are loſt in theſe deluſions, why am I thus graciouſly diſtinguiſhed? Inſtead of being born among the ſhameful vices of impious parents, and an heir to their curſes, why am I entitled to the bleſſing of religious anceſtors? Why, when I was incapable of choice, was I devoted to the God that "keeps covenant and mercy to "a thouſand generations of them that fear him?"

Why, when I knew thee not, didſt thou ſuſtain me? But Oh! why, when I knew thee, and rebelled againſt thee, why didſt thou ſo long ſuffer my ingratitude? Why did thy watchful providence perpetually ſurround me, croſſing all the methods I took to undo myſelf? Why was I not curſt with my own wiſhes, and left to the quiet poſſeſſion of thoſe vanities I delighted in? thoſe toys which I fooliſhly preferred to all the treaſures of thy love? Why didſt thou purſue me with the offers of thy favour when I fled thee with ſuch averſion; and hadſt fled thee for ever, if thou hadſt not compelled me to return?

Why did thy ſpirit ſtrive ſo long with an obſtinate heart, which reſiſted all its motions, and turned thy patience and long-ſuffering into provocation and guilt? Why am I not undone by thoſe pleaſing ſnares in which I have ſeen ſo many deluded wretches periſh? Like them I deſpiſed

ſed the unſearchable riches of thy grace; with them I had been content to ſhare the ſorry portion and pleaſures of this world, if thou hadſt let me alone, and I ſhould never have enquired after thee; but why waſt thou found of one that ſought thee not? O why, but "becauſe thou "wilt be merciful to whom thou wilt be mer- "ciful?"

Therefore again with aſtoniſhment and delight I look back on the methods of thy grace; and again I conſider myſelf loſt in an abyſs of ſin and miſery; when there was no eye to pity me, no hand but thine to aſſiſt me, thou madeſt it then the time of love. Never was grace more free and ſurpriſing than thine is; never was there a more obſtinate heart than mine; and never ſuch unconquerable love as thine. How gloriouſly has it triumphed over my rebellious faculties? How freely has it cancelled all my guilt?

Could I have made the leaſt pretence to merit, or have challenged any thing from thee, the benefit had been leſs exalted; had there been any foundation for human pride, my corrupt heart would ſoon have taken the advantage, and robbed thee of thy honour by aſcribing the glorious work to the ſtrength of my own reaſon, or a natural tendency to virtue; but here my vanity is for ever ſilenced. I am loſt in the boundleſs abyſs. O height! O depth! O length and breadth immeaſureable! "How unſearchable are thy

" ways," Almighty Love, " and thy paths paſt " finding out?"

Let me here begin my eternal ſong, and aſcribe " ſalvation and honour," dominion and majeſty, " to him that ſits on the throne, and to the " Lamb for ever," who has loved me, and ranſomed me with his blood; ranſomed me from a voluntary bondage, from the moſt vile and hopeleſs captivity, a captivity from which nothing but that invaluable purchaſe could have redeemed me.

" Infinite love! Almighty grace!
" Stand in amaze, ye rolling ſkies;

Bring hither your celeſtial harps, ye beneficent beings, who amidſt the height of your happineſs expreſs a kind regard for man: teach me the language of Paradiſe, the ſtrains of immortality. But Oh! 'tis all too feeble, the tongues of ſeraphims cannot utter what I owe my Redeemer: from what miſery, my adorable Saviour, haſt thou reſcued me? From error, from ſin, from ſnares and death, from infernal chains, eternal horror, and the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever?

Nor here my glorious benefactor ſtayed; but ſtill went on to magnify the riches of his grace, and entitled me to an endleſs inheritance, and an immortal crown; to the fruition of God, and the unutterable joys that flow from his preſence.

Myſterious

Myſterious depths of boundleſs love
My admiration raiſe;
O God, thy name exalted ſtands
Above all earthly praiſe.

IX. *Evidences of ſincere love to GOD.*

IF I love thee not, my bleſſed God, I know not what I love: if I am uncertain of this, I am uncertain of my exiſtence: if I love thee not, what is the meaning of theſe pathetic expreſſions, My God, My All! thou ſpring of my life, and fountain of my happineſs! my great reward, and my exceeding joy; the eternal object of my love, and ſupreme felicity of my nature. Does not my heart attend my lips in all this language? How can this be, if my ſoul does not love thee?

O my God, if I love thee not, what is the meaning of this conſtant uneaſineſs at thy abſence? From whence proceeds this painful anxiety of mind about thy love, and all theſe intenſe, theſe reſtleſs deſires after thee? Why are all theſe ſatisfactions of life inſipid without thee? Without my God what are riches, and honours, and pleaſures to me? I ſhould eſteem the poſſeſſion of the world but a trifle, or rather my eternal damage, if it muſt be purchaſed with the loſs of thy favour. Thy benignity is better than life,

and the moments in which I enjoy a ſenſe of thy love, are the only happy intervals of my life. It is then I live; 'tis then I am truly bleſſed: 'tis then I look down with contempt on the little amuſements of the world, and pity them that want a taſte for theſe exalted pleaſures.

How calm, how peaceful in thoſe ſeaſons are all the regions of my ſoul! I have enough, I ask no more. Can they languiſh for the ſtream, who drink at the overflowing fountain? I have all the world and more, I have heaven itſelf in thee: in thee I am completely and ſecurely bleſſed, and can defy the malice of earth and hell to ſhake the foundation of my happineſs, whilſt thou doſt whiſper thy love to my ſoul. O bleſſed ſtability of heart! O ſublime ſatisfaction! Haſt thou not told me that thou art mine by an inviolable engagement, when my ſoul devoted itſelf to thee? Does not thy words aſſure me, "that mountains "ſhall depart, and hills be removed; but thy "kindneſs ſhall not depart, nor the covenant of "thy peace be broken?"

Haſt thou not terminated my wiſhes, O Lord, in thyſelf, and fixed my wandering deſires? Is it for riches or honour, for length of days, or pleaſure, that I follow thee with daily importunities? Thou knoweſt theſe are not the ſubject of my reſtleſs petitions: do I ever balance theſe toys with thy favour? Oh no: one ſmile of thine obſcures all their glory. When thou doſt bleſs my retired devotions with thy preſence, I can

wink

wink all created beauty into blackneſs. When I meet thee in my ſolitary contemplations, with what contempt do I look back on the leſſening world.

How dazzling is thy beauty! how divine!
How dim the luſtre of the world to thine!

How dull are its entertainments to the pleaſure of converſing with thee? Oh ſtay, in thoſe happy moments, cries my ſatisfied ſoul.

Stay, my beloved, with me here;
Stay till the morning-ſtar appear:
Stay till the dusky ſhadows fly
Before the day's illuſtrious eye.

Oh! ſtay till the gloomy night of life is paſt, and eternity dawn on my ſoul. There's nothing in this barren place to entertain me when thou art gone; I can reliſh nothing below after theſe celeſtial banquets.

If I love thee not, what's the meaning of this impatience to be with thee? "My ſoul longeth, "yea fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; "when ſhall I come and appear before thee? Oh! "that I had the wings of a dove; for then would "I fly away and be at reſt."

X. *Assurances of salvation in* CHRIST JESUS.

I HAVE put my treasure, my immortal part, into thy hands, Oh, my dear Redeemer, and "shall the prey be taken from the mighty?" Shall a soul consecrated to thee fall a sacrifice to hell?

Blessed God, am I not thine? And shall the temple of thy spirit be profaned, and the lips that have so often ascribed dominion, and glory and majesty to thee, be defiled with infernal blasphemy, and the execrations of the damned? Shall the sparks of divine love be extinguished, and immortal enmity succeed? And shall I, who was once blessed with thy favour, become the object of thy wrath and indignation? Shall all the mighty things thou hast done for my soul be forgotten? Shall all my vows, and thy own sacred engagements be cancelled? 'Tis impossible; for "thou art not as man, that thou shouldst lie; "nor as the son of man, that thou shouldst re-"pent."

Thou art engaged by thy own tremendous name for my security: my God, and my father's God, from generation to generation thou hast been our dwelling-place. I was devoted to thee in baptism by the solemn vows of my religious parents: my infant hands were early lifted up to thee, and I soon learned to know and acknowledge the God of my fathers. I have actually subscribed

ſubſcribed with my hand to the Lord, and am thine by the moſt voluntary and deliberate obligations. The portion of Jacob is my joyful choice, nor need I fear loſing it, while thy word is eſtabliſhed as the heavens.

The Lord, who made heaven, earth, and ſea,
And all that they contain,
Will never quit his ſtedfaſt truth,
Nor make his promiſe vain.

Were my dependance on myſelf, I were undone: the firſt temptation would ſhake my reſolutions; I ſhould ſell the ineſtimable riches of thy love for a trifle, and fool away immortal pleaſures for the joys of a moment; a ſpecious deluſion would ſeduce me from all my hopes of a glorious futurity, I ſhall fall a victim to my own folly, and muſt inevitably periſh if thou forſake me: but the Strength of Iſrael is my hope, the Mighty One of Jacob my defence.

Thou art the Rock of ages; the fixed and immutable Divinity is my high tower, and my refuge, my Redeemer, and almighty Saviour. Theſe were the bleſs'd, the glorious titles by which thou didſt at firſt aſſure my doubtful ſoul: theſe were the tranſporting names I knew and called thee by; and thou haſt anſwered them through all the changes of my life.

I was thy early care; thou didſt ſupport my helpleſs infancy, and art the watchful guide to

my unsteady youth. Which way soever I turn, I meet thy mercy, and trace thy providence; and as long as I live, I will record thy benefits, and depend on thy truth; those benefits which have constantly pursued me and is engaged never to abandon me. Transporting assurance! What further security can I ask? What security can I wish beyond eternal veracity? "The mountains "shall depart, and the hills be removed, but thy "kindness shall not depart, nor the covenant of "thy peace be broken;" that covenant which has been sealed by the blood of the Son of God, and in that holy sacrament I have received the pledges of thy love. Thou didst graciously invite me into that communion, and meet me there with the most unmerited favour.

Fear not, sayst thou, poor trembling soul, for I am thy Redeemer and thy mighty Saviour, the hope of Israel, and in my name shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: "I am gracious "and merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in "goodness and truth:" These are the titles by which I have revealed myself to men. I came the expected Messiah, the star of Jacob, and the glory of the Gentiles. I came from the fulness of ineffable glory, in the form of man, to redeem the race of Adam. I am willing and able to save, and "whosoever comes to me, I will in "no wise cast him away." Fear not, I had kind designs towards thee from eternity: and by these visible signs of my body and blood, I seal my love

love to thy soul: take here the pledges of heaven, the assurances of everlasting happiness.

'Tis enough, replied my transported soul; divide the world as thou wilt, let others unenvy'd share its glory; thy love is all I crave. I am blessed with that assurance, I am surrounded with the joys of Paradise; every place is a heaven, while my Beloved is mine, and I am his.

If all the monarchs, whose command supreme
Divides the wide dominion of this ball,
Should offer each his boasted diadem,
I would not quit thy favour for them all:
These trifles with contempt I would resign;
The world's a toy, while I can call thee mine.

Let God and angels witness for me, that I renounce the world, and chuse thy love as my portion; witness that I sacrifice my darling sins to thee, and from this moment solemnly devout myself to thy service.

Thus did I engage myself to be the Lord's, and thus didst thou graciously condescend to seal the privileges of a new covenant to my soul, and O let the solemn transaction never be forgotten; let it be writ in the volumes of eternity; let it be engraved in the books of unalterable destiny: there let the sacred articles stand recorded, and be had in everlasting remembrance.

XI. *Thou art my GOD.*

O GOD, thou art my God; thou art thy own blessedness, the center of thy own desires, and the boundless spring of thy own happiness. Thou art immutably and infinitely perfect, and therein consists thy blessedness and glory: But that "thou art my God," 'tis from thence flows all my consolation; this glorious privilege is my dignity and boast, "Thou art "my God, and I will praise thee; my fathers "God, and I will exalt thee; the Lord liveth, "and blessed be my rock, and let the God of "my salvation be exalted. Thy benignity is "better than life, therefore my lips shall praise "thee."

I have all things in possessing thee; I find no want, no emptiness within; my wishes are answered, and all my desires appeased, when I believe my title to thy favour secure. Whatever tempests arise, whatever darkness surrounds me, yet *thou art my God*; I cry, and the storms are appeased, and the darkness vanishes. I find my expectations from the world disappointed, my friends false, and human dependence vain; but still *thou art my God*, my unfailing confidence, my rock, my everlasting inheritance. Death and hell level their darts against me; but with a heavenly tranquillity I cry, "Thou art "my

" my God: I dwell on high, my place of de-
" fence is the munition of rocks.

My hiding-place, my refuge, tower
And shield, art thou, O Lord:
I firmly anchor all my hopes
On thy unerring word.

While thou art mine, what can I fear? Can omnipotence be vanquished? can almighty strength be opposed? When it can, then, and not till then, shall I want security: then, and not till then, shall my confidence be shaken, and my hopes confounded.

Thou art my God: Let me again repeat the glorious accents, and hear the pleasurable sounds. Let me a thousand and a thousand times repeat it; 'tis rapture all, and harmony: the harps of angels and their tongues, what notes more melodious could they sing or play? What but these transporting words give the emphasis to all their joys? On this they dwell, 'tis their eternal theme, " Thou art my God." Like me every seraph boasts the glorious propriety, and owes his happiness to those important words: in them unbounded joy are comprehended, paradise itself, all heaven is here described; all that is possible to be uttered of celestial blessedness is here contained.

My God, my all-sufficient good,
My portion and my choice;

In thee my vaſt deſires are fill'd,
And all my powers rejoice.

My God, my triumph, and my glory, let others boaſt of what they will, and pride themſelves in human ſecurities: let them place their confidence in their wealth, their honour, and their numerous friends: I renounce all earthly dependence, and glory only in my God.

From him alone my joys ſhall riſe
And run eternal rounds,
Beyond the limits of the ſkies
And all created bounds.

When death ſhall remove all other ſupports, and force me to quit my title to the deareſt names below, in *my God* I ſhall have an unchangeable propriety: that engagement ſhall remain firm, when I ſhall loſe my hold of all other enjoyments; when all human things vaniſh with an everlaſting flight, I ſhall bid them a joyful adieu, and breathe out my ſoul with this triumphant exclamation, *thou art my God*, my inheritance, my eternal poſſeſſion: nor death nor hell ſhall ever ſeparate me from thy love.

"Thou art my God." Let me ſurvey the extent of my bleſſedneſs: let me take a proſpect of my vaſt poſſeſſion: let me conſider its dimenſions; O height! O depth! O length and breadth immeaſureable!

meaſureable! I have all that is worth the poſſeſſing; "thou art my God."

But what have I uttered? Is mortality permitted to ſpeak theſe daring words? can the race of man make ſuch glorious pretenſions? Thou thyſelf canſt give no more; thou that art thy own happineſs, and the ſpring of joy to all thy creatures; with thee are the fountains of pleaſure, and in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy: immortal life and happineſs flow from thee, and they are neceſſarily bleſſed who are ſurrounded with thy favour; thou art their God, and "thou art my "God" to everlaſting ages.

Earth flies with all the charms it has in ſtore,
Its ſnares and gay temptations are no more;
Creatures no more in entity can boaſt
The ſtreams, the hills, and tow'ring groves are loſt,
The ſun, the ſtars, and all the fields of light
Withdraw, and now are vaniſh'd from my ſight;
And God is all in all.

XII. *Confeſſion of ſin, with hope of pardon.*

BREAK, break, inſenſible heart! let confuſion cover me, and darkneſs, black as my own guilt, ſurround me. Lord, what a monſter am I become? How hateful to myſelf for offending thee? How much more deteſtable to thee, to thee, againſt whom I have offended? Why have

I provoked the God on whom my being every moment depends? The God, who out of nothing advanced me to a reasonable and immortal nature, and put me in a capacity of being happy for ever? The God whose goodness has run parallel with my life; who has preserved me in a thousand dangers, and kept me even from the ruin I courted, and even while I repined at the providence that saved me.

How often has he recovered me from eternal misery, and brought me back from the very borders of hell, when there was but a dying groan between, but one faint sigh between me and everlasting perdition? When all human help failed, and my mournful friends were taking their last farewels; when every smiling hope forsook me, and the horrors of death surrounded me, to God I cried from the depths of misery and despair; I cried, and he was intreated, and rescued my life from destruction; he "brought me out of "the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock." A thousand instances of thy goodness could I recount, and all to my own confusion.

Could I consider thee as my enemy, I might forgive myself; but when I consider thee as my best friend, my tender father, the sustainer of my life, and author of my happiness, good God! what a monstrous thing do I appear, who have sinned against thee? Could I charge thee with severity, or call thy laws rigorous and unjust, I had some excuse; but I am silenced there by the conviction

conviction of my own reason, which assents to all thy precepts as just and holy. But to heighten my guilt, I have violated the sacred rules I approve: I have provoked the justice I fear, and offended the purity I adore.

Yet still there are higher aggravations of my iniquity; and what gives me the utmost confusion is, that I have sinned against unbounded love and goodness: horrid ingratitude? here lies the emphasis of my folly and misery; the sense of this torments me, can I not say, as much as the dread of hell, or the fears of losing heaven? Thy love and tender compassion, the late pleasing subjects of my thoughts, are on this account become my terror. The titles of an enemy and a judge scarce sound more painful to my ears, than those of a friend and a benefactor, which so shamefully enhance my guilt: those sacred names confound and terrify my soul, because they furnish my conscience with the most exquisite reproaches: the thoughts of such goodness abused, and such clemency affronted, seem to me almost as insupportable, as those of thy wrath and severity.

O whether shall I turn? I dare not look upward; the sun and stars upbraid me there; if I look downward, the fields and fountains take their Creator's part, and heaven and earth conspire to aggravate my sin: those common blessings tell me how much I am indebted to thy bounty: but, Lord, when I recal thy particular favours, I am utterly confounded; what numerous

rous inſtances could I recount? Nor has my rebellion yet ſhut up the fountain of thy grace; for yet I breathe, and yet I live, and live to implore a pardon: heaven is ſtill open, and the throne of God acceſſible. But oh! with what confidence can I approach it? what motives can I urge, but ſuch as carry my own condemnation in them.

Shall I urge thy former pity and indulgence? this were to plead againſt myſelf: and yet thy clemency, that clemency, which I have abuſed, is the beſt argument I can bring; thy grace and clemency, as revealed in JESUS, the Son of thy love, the bleſſed Reconciler of God to man.

O whether has my folly reduced me? With what words ſhall I chuſe to addreſs thee? "Pardon "my iniquity, O Lord, for it is great:" ſurprizing argument: yet this will magnify thy goodneſs, and yield me an eternal theme to praiſe thee: 'twill add an emphaſis to all my grateful ſongs, and tune my harp to everlaſting harmony. The ranſomed of the Lord ſhall join with me, while this glorious inſtance of thy grace excites their wonder, and my unbounded gratitude; thus ſhall thy glory be exalted.

O LORD GOD, permit a poor worthleſs creature to plead a little with thee; What profit, what triumph to the Almighty will my perdition be? Mercy is thy brighteſt attribute; this gives thee all thy lovelineſs, and compleats thy beauty. By names of kindneſs and indulgences thou

thou has choſen to reveal thyſelf to men; by titles of the moſt tender import thou haſt made thyſelf known to my ſoul; titles which thou doſt not yet diſdain, but are ſtill compaſſionate and ready to pardon.

But that thou haſt or wilt forgive me, O my God, aggravates my guilt. And wilt thou indeed forgive me? Wilt thou remit the gloomy ſcore, and reſtore the privilege I have forfeited? Wondrous love! aſtoniſhing benignity! let me never live to repeat my ingratitude; let me never live to break my penitent vows; let me die ere that unhappy moment arrive.

XIII. *The abſence of GOD on earth.*

WHAT is hell, what is damnation, but an excluſion from thy preſence? 'Tis the want of that which gives the regions of darkneſs all their horror. What is heaven, what are the ſatisfaction of angels, but the views of thy glory? what but thy ſmiles and complacence are the ſprings of their immortal tranſports?

Without the light of thy countenance, what privilege is my being? What canſt thou thyſelf give me to counteryail the infinite loſs; Could the riches, the empty glories, and inſipid pleaſures of the world, recompence me for it? Ah! no. Not all the variety of the creation could ſatisfy me while I am deprived of thee: let the ambitious, the licentious and covetous, ſhare

ſhare theſe trifles among themſelves; they are no amuſements for my dejected thoughts.

There was a time (but ah! that happy time is paſt, thoſe bliſsful minutes gone) when with a modeſt aſſurance I could call thee "my father, "my almighty friend, my defence, my hope, "and my exceeding great reward;" but thoſe "glorious advantages are loſt, thoſe raviſhing proſpects withdrawn, and to my trembling ſoul thou doſt no more appear but as a conſuming fire, an inacceſſible majeſty, my ſevere judge, and my omnipotent adverſary; and who ſhall deliver me out of thy hands? Where ſhall I find a ſhelter from thy wrath? What ſhades can cover me from thy all-ſeeing eye?

One glance from thee, one piercing ray,
Would kindle darkneſs into day!
The vail of night is no diſguiſe,
No ſcreen from thy all-ſearching eyes:
Thro' mid-night ſhades thou find'ſt thy way,
And in the blazing noon of day.

"But will the Lord caſt off for ever? Will he "be favourable no more? Has God indeed for-"gotten to be gracious?" Will he ſhut out my prayer for ever, and muſt I never behold my Maker? muſt I never meet theſe ſmiles that fill the heavenly inhabitants with unutterable joys? thoſe ſmiles which enlighten the celeſtial region, and make everlaſting day above? In vain then have

have these wretched eyes beheld the light, in vain am I endued with reasonable faculties and immortal principles; alas! what will they prove but everlasting curses, if I must never see the face of God.

Is it a dream? or do I hear
The voice that so delights my ear?
Lo, he o'er hills his steps extends,
And bounding from the cliffs descends:
Now like a roe outstrips the wind,
And leaves the panting hart behind.

"I have waited for thee as they that wait for "the morning," and thy returns are more welcome than the springing day-light after the horrors of a melancholy night; more welcome than ease to the sick, than water to the thirsty, or rest to the weary traveller. How undone was I without thee? In vain, while thou art absent, the world hath tried to entertain me; all it could offer was like jests to dying men, or like recreations to the damned. On thy favour alone my tranquillity depends; deprived of that, I should sigh for happiness in the midst of a paradise: "thy loving-kindness is better than life," and if a taste of thy love be thus transporting, what extasies shall I know when I drink my fill of the streams of bliss that flow from thy right-hand for ever: But when-----

When

When shall this happy day of vision be?
When shall I make a near approach to thee
Be lost in love and wrapt in ecstasy?
Oh! when shall I behold thee all serene,
Without this envious cloudy veil between?
'Tis true the sacred elements * impart
Thy virtual presence to my faithful heart,
But to my sense still unreveal'd thou art.
This, tho' a great, is an imperfect bliss,
To see a shadow for the God I wish;
My soul a more exalted pitch would fly,
And view thee in the heights of majesty.

XIV. *Banishment from GOD for ever.*

"DEPART from me, ye cursed." Oh! let me never hear thy voice pronounce those dreadful words. With what terrors would that sentence pierce my heart, while it thunders in my ears? Oh! rather speak me into my primitive nothing, and with one potent word finish my existence. To be separated from thee, and curst with immortality, who can sustain the intolerable doom?

O dreadful state of black despair,
To see my God remove,
And fix my doleful station where
I must not taste his love,

nor view the light of thy countenance for ever. Unutterable

* The L rd's Supper.

Unutterable woe! there is no hell beyond it. Separation from God is the depth of misery. Blackness of darkness, and eternal night must necessarily involve a soul excluded from thy presence. What life, what joy, what hope is to be found where thou art not? I want words to paint my thoughts of that dismal state. Oh! let me never be reserv'd for that dreadful experience! rather let loose thy wrath, and in a moment reduce me into nothing.

" Depart from thee! Oh! whether should I " go from thee! Into utter darkness?" That makes no addition at all to the wretch's misery that's banish'd from thy face. After that fearful doom, I should without constraint seek out shades as dark as hell, being most agreeable to my own despair, and in the horrors of eternal night bewail the infinite loss.

The remembrance of that lost happiness would render celestial day insufferable. The light of paradise could not chear me without thy favour: the songs of angels would but heighten my anguish, and torment me with a scene of bliss which I must never taste. The sight of thy favourites, and the glories of thy court, could but excite my envy, and fill me with madness, while I considered myself the object of thine eternal indignation nor could all the harmony of heaven allay the horror of that reflection.

The groans of the damn'd, and the darkness of infernal caverns, would better suit my grief.

There

There to the cries of tormented ghoſts, and to the ſounds of eternal tempeſts, I might join my wild complaints, and lament the loſs of infinite bliſs, and curſe my own folly! but all the plagues below, if I might ſpeak my preſent thoughts, ſhould not extort a blaſphemous reflection on the divine attributes; for I know I deſerve eternal miſery, and even in hell I think I ſhould confeſs thy juſtice. Thy long experienced clemency, I am ſure, ought to ſilence my reproaches for ever, and to all eternity leave thee unblemiſh'd with the imputation of cruelty.

But oh! what agonies would the remembrance of thy former favour excite? What exquiſite remorſe would it give me to recal thoſe happy moments when thou didſt bleſs my retired devotions with thy preſence? After I have reliſhed thoſe divine entertainments, how bitter would the dregs of thy wrath be? Whether would thy frowns ſink me, after I have enjoyed the light of thy countenence?

If I muſt loſe thy *favour*, oh! let me forget what that word imports, and blot for ever from my remembrance the joys that a ſenſe of thy love has excited: let no traces of thoſe ſacred tranſports be left on my ſoul.

But muſt I depart from thee into everlaſting fire! Double and dreadful curſe! and yet unquenchable flames, and infernal chains (if I can judge in this life of ſuch awful futurities) would be leſs terrible than the ſenſe of thoſe loſt joys.

That

That loſs would endure no reflection; the review would be for ever inſufferable; the ages of eternity could not diminiſh the exquiſite regret; ſtill it would excite new and unutterable anguiſh, and rack me with infinite deſpair.

Bleſſed God, pity the ſoul whoſe extremeſt horror is the doom of an eternal departure from thee. Draw my ſpirit into the holieſt and the neareſt union with thyſelf that is poſſible, while it dwells in this fleſh, and let me here commence that delightful reſidence and converſe with God, which neither death nor judgment ſhall ever deſtroy, nor ſhall a long eternity ever put a period to it.

XV. *The glory of GOD in his works of creation, providence, and redemption.*

MY being immediately flows from thee, and ſhould I not praiſe my omnipotent Maker? I received the laſt breath I drew from thee, thou doſt ſuſtain my life this very moment, and the next depends entirely on thy pleaſure. 'Tis the dignity of my nature to know, and my happineſs to praiſe and adore my great original. But, Oh! thou ſupreme of all things, how art thou to be extolled by mortal man? "I ſay to cor-"ruption, Thou art my father: and to the "worms, ye are my brethren, my days are as a "hand's breadth, and my life is nothing before "thee; but thou art the ſame, and thy years "never

" never fail: from everlasting to everlasting thou " art God," the incomprehensible, the immutable Divinity. The language of paradise, the strains of celestial eloquence, fall short of thy perfections; the first-born sons of light lose themselves in blissful astonishment in search of thy excellencies; even they, with silent extasy, adore thee, while thou art veiled with ineffable splendor.

The bright the bless'd Divinity is known
And comprehended by himself alone.

Who can conceive the extent of that power, which out of nothing brought materials for a rising world, and from a gloomy chaos bid the harmonious universe appear?

Confusion heard the voice, and wild uproar
Stood rul'd; stood vast infinity confin'd.

At thy word the pillars of the sky were framed, and its beauteous arches raised: thy breath kindled the stars, adorned the moon with silver rays, and gave the sun its flaming splendor. Thou didst prepare for the waters their capacious bed, and by thy power set bounds to the raging billows: by thee the valleys were clothed in their flowery pride, and the mountains crowned with groves. In all the wonderful effects of nature, we adore and confess thy power; thou uttereſt thy

thy voice in thunder, and doſt ſcatter thy lightning abroad; thou rideſt on the wings of the wind, the mountains ſmoke, and the foreſts tremble at thy approach; the ſummer and winter, the ſhady night, and the bright revolutions of the day, are thine:

Theſe are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty; thine this univerſal frame:
Thus wondrous they; thyſelf how wondrous
then?

But O! what muſt thy eſſential majeſty and beauty be, if thou art thus illuſtrious in thy works? if the diſcoveries of thy power and wiſdom are thus delightful, how tranſporting are the manifeſtations of thy goodneſs? From thee every thing that lives receives its breath; and by thee are all upheld in life. Thy providence reaches the leaſt inſect, for thou art good, and thy care extends to all thy works. Thou feedeſt the ravens, and doſt provide the young lions their prey; thou ſcattereſt thy bleſſings with a liberal hand on the whole creation; man, ungrateful man, largely partakes thy bounty. Thou cauſeſt thy rain to deſcend, and makeſt thy ſun to ſhine on the evil and unthankful; "for thou art good, "and thy mercy endureth for ever."

As the Creator and Preſerver of man, thou art glorioufly manifeſt; but oh! how much more glorioufly art thou revealed, as reconciling un-

grateful enemies to thyself by the blood of thy eternal Son? Here thy beneficence displays its brightest splendor: here thou dost fully discover thy most magnificent titles, THE LORD, THE LORD GOD, MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, LONG-SUFFERING, AND ABUNDANT IN GOODNESS! "How "unsearchable are thy ways, and thy paths past "finding out?" Infinite depths of love, never to be expressed by human language! and yet should man be silent, the stones themselves would speak, and the mute creation find a voice to upbraid his ungrateful folly.

XVI. *Longing for the coming of* CHRIST.

COME, LORD JESUS, come quickly: Oh! come, lest my expectations faint, lest I grow weary, and murmur at thy long delay. I am tired with these vanities, and the world grows every day more unentertaining and insipid; it has now lost its charms, and finds my heart insensible to all its allurements. With coldness and contempt I view these transitory glories, inspired with nobler prospects and vaster expectations by faith. I see the promised land, and every day brings me nearer the possession of my heavenly inheritance. Then shall I see God and live, and face to face behold my triumphant Redeemer,

And in his favour find immortal light.
Ye hours and days, cut short your tedious flight;

Ye

Ye months and years (if ſuch allotted be
In this deteſted barren world for me)
With haſty revolution roll along,
I languiſh with impatience to be gone.

I have nothing here to linger for; my hopes, my reſt, my treaſure, and my joys are all above: my ſoul faints for the courts of the Lord, in a dry and thirſty land, where there is no refreſhment.

How long "ſhall I dwell in Meſhech, and ſo-"journ in the tents of Kedar? When will the weariſome journey of life be finiſhed? When ſhall I reach my everlaſting home, and arrive at my celeſtial country? My heart, my wiſhes are already there: I have no engagements to delay my farewel, nothing to detain me here; but wander an unacquainted pilgrim, a ſtranger and deſolate, far from my native regions.

My friends are gone before, and are now triumphing in the ſkies, ſecure of the conqueſt, poſſeſſed of the rewards of victory. They ſurvey the field of battle, and look back with pleaſure on the diſtant danger: death and hell for ever vanquiſhed, leave them in the poſſeſſion of endleſs tranquillity and joy; while I, beſet with a thouſand ſnares, and tired with continual toil, unſteadily maintain the field, till active faith ſteps in, aſſures me of the conqueſt, and ſhews me the immortal crown. 'Tis faith tells me that "light "is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the

" upright in heart;" it assures me, that " my " Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand the " last day on the earth; and though after my " skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh " shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, " and not another; and these eyes shall behold, " though my reins be consumed within me." Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus. This must be the language of my soul till thou dost appear, and these my impatient breathings after thee. Till I see thy salvation my heart and my flesh will pine for the living God.

" Grant me, O LORD, to fulfil as a hireling " my day;" shorten the space, and let it be full of action. 'Tis of small importance how few there are of these little circles of days and hours, so they are but well filled up with devotion, and with all proper duty.

XVII. *Seeking after an absent* GOD.

OH! let not the Lord be angry, and I who am but dust will speak; why dost thou withdraw thyself, and suffer me to pursue thee in vain? If I am surrounded with thy immensity, why am I thus insensible of thee? Why do I not find thee if thou art every where present? I search thee in the temple, where thou hast often met me; there I have seen the traces of thy majesty and beauty; but those sacred visions bless my sight no more. I search thee in my secret retirements,

retirements, where I have called upon thy name, and have often heard the whiſpers of thy voice; that celeſtial converſation hath often reached and raptured my ſoul, but I am ſolaced no more with thoſe divine condeſcenſions; I liſten, but I hear thoſe gentle ſounds no more; I pine and languiſh, but thou flieſt me ſtill; I wither in thy abſence, as a drooping plant for the reviving ſun.

O when wilt thou ſcatter this melancholy darkneſs? When ſhall the ſhadows flee before thee? When ſhall the chearful glory of thy grace dawn upon my mind at thy approach? I ſhall revive at thy light; my vital ſpirits will confeſs thy preſence; grief and anxiety will vaniſh before thee, and immortal joys ſurround my ſoul.

Where thou art preſent, heaven and happineſs enſue; hell and damnation fills the breaſt where thou art abſent. While God withdraws, I am encompaſſed with darkneſs and deſpair; the ſun and ſtars ſhine with an uncomfortable luſtre; the face of my friends grow tireſome; the ſmiles of angels would fail to cheer my languiſhing ſpirit. I grow unacquainted with tranquillity; peace and joy are empty ſounds to me, and words without a meaning.

Tell me not of glory and pleaſure, there are no ſuch things without my God; while he withdraws, what delight can theſe trifles afford? All that amuſes mankind, are but dreams of happi-

neſs, ſhades and fantaſtick appearances: what compenſation can they make for an infinite good departed? All nature cannot repair my loſs: heaven and earth would offer their treaſures in vain! not all the kingdoms of this world, nor the thrones of archangels, could give me a recompenſe for an abſent God.

O where can my grief find redreſs? Whence can I draw ſatisfaction when the fountain of joy ſeals up its ſtreams? My ſorrows are hopeleſs till he return; without him my night will never ſee a dawn, but extend to everlaſting darkneſs: content and joy are eternal ſtrangers to my breaſt. Had I all things within the compaſs of creation to delight me, his frowns would blaſt my enjoyment: unreconciled to God, my ſoul would be for ever at variance with itſelf.

Even now, while I believe thy glory hid from me but with a tranſient eclipſe, while I wait for thy return as for the dawning day, my ſoul ſuffers inexpreſſible agonies at the delay; the minutes ſeem to linger, and days are lengthened into ages: but, Lord, what keener anguiſh ſhould I feel, did I think thy preſence had totally forſaken me; did I imagine thy glory ſhould no more ariſe on my ſoul? My ſpirits fail at the ſuppoſition: I cannot face the dreadful apprehenſions of my God for ever gone. Is it not hell in its moſt horrid proſpect, eternal darkneſs, and the undying worm, infinite ruin and irreparable damage? Compared to this, what were all the plagues

plagues that earth could threaten, or hell invent? What's diſgrace, and poverty, and pain? What's all that mortals fear, real or imaginary evils? They are nothing compared to the terrors which the thought of loſing my God excites.

O thou, who art my boundleſs treaſure, my infinite delight, my all, my ineffable portion, can I part with thee? I may ſee without light, and breathe without air, ſooner than be bleſſed without my God. Happineſs ſeparate from thee were a contradiction, an impoſſibility (if I dare ſpeak it) to Omnipotence itſelf. I feel a flame which the moſt glorious creation could not ſatisfy; an emptineſs which nothing but infinite love could fill. I muſt find thee, or weary myſelf in an eternal purſuit. Nothing ſhall divert me in the endleſs ſearch, no obſtacle ſhall fright me back, no allurement with-hold me, nothing ſhall flatter or relieve my impatience; my bliſs, my heaven, my all depends on the ſucceſs. Shew me where thou art, O my God, conduct me to thy preſence, and let thy love confine me there for ever.

XVIII. *Appeals to GOD concerning the ſupremacy of love to him.*

O GOD, when I ceaſe to love and praiſe thee, let me ceaſe to breathe and live, when I forget thee, let me forget the name of happineſs, and let every pleaſing idea be razed from my memory. When thou art not my ſupreme

delight, let all things elſe deceive me; let me grow unacquainted with peace, and ſeek repoſe in vain: let deluſions mock my gayeſt hopes, let my deſires find no ſatisfaction, till they are terminated all in thee. When I forget the ſatisfactions of thy love, O my God, let pleaſure be a ſtranger to my ſoul; when I prefer not that to my chiefeſt joy, let me be inſenſible of all delight; when thy benignity is not dearer to me than life, let that become my burden and my pain.

Search the inmoſt receſſes of my heart, and if thou findeſt any competitor there, remove the darling vanity and blot every name but thine from my breaſt. Let me find nothing but emptineſs in the creature, when I forſake the all-ſufficient Creator: let the ſtreams be cut off when I wander away, and abandon the fountain. Let me be deſtitute of aſſiſtance when I ceaſe to rely on thee: let my lips be for ever ſilent when they refuſe to acknowledge thy benefits, and make not thee the ſubject of their higheſt praiſe. Let no joyful ſtrain enter at my ears, when thy name is not the moſt delightful ſound they can convey to my heart.

I have been pronouncing heavy curſes on myſelf, if thy love be not my chief bleſſing; yet, O my deareſt good, my portion and my only felicity, might I not go on further ſtill, and even venture immortal joys in the ſincerity of my love to thee? Bleſſed Lord, forgive theſe dangerous efforts

efforts of a mortal tongue, which are the mere outbreakings of a fervent affection. I could even dare to pledge all my hopes and my pretenſions of future happineſs, (and O let not my heart deceive me) I think I could riſque them all, if thou thyſelf, art not the object of my brighteſt hopes, and the light of thy countenance the height of that expected happineſs.

If I deſire any thing in heaven or on earth in compariſon of thee, I am almoſt ready to ſay, baniſh me as an eternal exile from the light of paradiſe; even that paradiſe would be melancholy darkneſs without thee, and the obſcureſt corner of the creation, bleſſed with thy preſence, would be more agreeable. Oh! where could I be happy remote from thee? What imaginable good could ſupply thy abſence? Say, O my God, do I not love thee? Shall I call the holy angels to witneſs? ſhall I call heaven and earth to witneſs? Will not the moſt high God himſelf, the poſſeſſor of heaven and earth, condeſcend to witneſs the ardour and ſincerity of my love?

With what pleaſure do I reflect on the obligations by which I have devoted myſelf to thee? my ſoul collects itſelf, and with an entire aſſent gives up all its powers to thee: I would bind myſel unto thee beyond all the ties that mortals know. You miniſters of light, give me your flames, and teach me your celeſtial forms: lend all the noble and pathetick, and ſolemn as your own immortal vows, and I will joyfully go through them

all to bind myself to my God, for ever. Say, now, ye heavens and earth, say, ye holy angels, and O thou all-knowing God, say, do I not love thee?

XIX. *A devout rapture, or love to GOD inexpressible.*

THOU radiant sun, thou moon, and all ye sparkling stars, how gladly would I leave your pleasant light to see the face of God? Ye crystal streams, ye groves and flowry lawns, my innocent delights, how joyfully could I leave you to meet that blissful prospect! And you delightful faces of my friends, I would this moment quit you all to see him whom my soul loves; so loves, that I can find no words to express the unutterable ardour: not as the miser loves his wealth, nor the ambitious his grandeur; not as the libertine his pleasure, or the generous man his friend; these are flat similitudes to describe such an intense passion as mine. Not as a man scorched in a fever, longs for a cooling draught? not as a weary traveller wishes for soft repose; my restless desires admit of no equal comparison from these.

I love my friend; my vital breath and the light of heaven are dear to me: but should I say, I love my God as I love these, I should belie the sacred flame which aspires to infinity. 'Tis thee, abstractedly thee, O uncreated beauty, that

that I love; in thee, my wiſhes are all terminated; in thee, as in their bliſsful centre, all my deſires meet, and there they muſt be eternally fixed: 'Tis thou alone that muſt conſtitute my everlaſting happineſs.

Were the harps of angels ſilent, there would be harmony for me in the whiſpers of thy love: were the fields of light darkened, thy ſmiles would bleſs me with everlaſting day: the viſion of thy face will attract my eyes, nor give me leiſure to waſte a look on other objects to all eternity, any further than God is to be ſeen in his creatures. All their beams of grace, and joy, and glory, are derived from thee, the eternal Son, and will merit my attention no further than they reflect of thy image, or diſcover thy excellencies.

Even at this diſtance, encompaſſed with the ſhades of death, and the miſts of darkneſs, in theſe cold melancholy regions, when a ray of thy love breaks in on my ſoul, when through the clouds I can trace but one feeble beam, even that obſcures all human glory, and gives me a contempt for whatever mortality can boaſt. What wonders then will the open viſion of thy face effect, when I ſhall enjoy it in ſo ſublime a degree, that the magnificence of the ſkies will not draw my regard, nor the converſe of angels divert my thoughts from thee? Thou wilt engroſs my everlaſting attention, and I ſhould abound in felicity, if I had nothing to entertain me but immediate communion with the infinite Divinity.

Mend thy pace, old lazy time, and ſhake thy heavy ſands; make ſhorter circles, ye rolling planets; when will your deſtined courſes be fulfilled? Thou reſtleſs ſun, how long wilt thou travel the celeſtial road? When will thy ſtarry walk be finiſhed? When will the commiſſioned angel arreſt thee in thy progreſs, and lifting up his hand, ſwear by the unutterable name, "that time "ſhall be no more?" O happy period! my impatient ſoul ſprings forward to ſalute thee, and leaves the lagging days, and months, and years far behind. "Make haſte, my beloved, and be "like a roe, or a young hart on the ſpicy moun-"tains."

I pine, I die for the ſight of thy countenance; oh! turn the veil aſide, blow away the ſeparating cloud; pull out the pins of this tabernacle, break the cords, and let fall the curtain of mortality. Oh! let it interpoſe no longer between me and my perfect bliſs. I feel thoſe flames of divine love, which are unextinguiſhable as the lights of heaven, not death itſelf ſhall quench the ſacred ardour.

Ye miniſters of light, ye guardians of the juſt, ſtand and witneſs to my vows; and in a humble dependence on thy grace, O Jeſus, may I not venture to bid theſe thy flaming miniſters proteſt againſt me when I change my love, and ſtand my accuſers at the laſt judgment? When I prove falſe to thee, may I not venture,

venture to ſay to them all, Bring in your awful evidence, and proclaim my perjury.

For you have liſten'd while the ſacred name
That kindles in each heavenly breaſt a flame,
You liſten'd while it melted on my tongue,
Flow'd from my lips, and grac'd the midnight ſong.
Bleſs'd was the time, and ſwiftly fled the hours
While holy love employ'd my nobleſt powers:
The heavens appear'd, and the propitious ſkies
Unveil'd their inmoſt glories to my eyes.
Oh! ſtay, I cry'd, ye happy moments, ſtay,
Nor in your flight ſnatch theſe delights away:
I aſk no more the riſing ſun to view,
To mortals and their hopes I bid adieu.

Theſe heavens and this earth have been witneſſes to my vows: the holy angels have been witneſſes, and all will join together to condemn me when I violate my faith. Strengthen and confirm it, O my Saviour, and make the bonds of it immortal.

If I were only to reaſon upon this ſubject, I might ſay, what motive could earth, what could hell, what could heaven itſelf propoſe to tempt my ſoul to change its love? What could they lay in the balance againſt an infinite good? What could be thrown in as a ſtake againſt the favour of God? Aſk the happy ſouls who know what the light of his countenance imports, who drink in joy and immortality from his ſmiles, aſk them what value

lue they ſet on their enjoyments; ask them what in heaven or earth ſhould purchaſe one moment's interval of their bliſs; ask ſome radiant ſeraph, amidſt the fervency of his raptures, at what price he values his happineſs: and when theſe have named the purchaſe, earth and hell may try to balance mine. Let them ſpread the baits that tempt deluded men to ruin; let riches honour, beauty, and bewitching pleaſure appear in all their charms, the ſenſuality of the preſent and paſt ages, the Perſian delicacy, and the Roman pride; let them uncover the golden mines, and diſcloſe the ruby ſparkling in its bed; let them open the veins of ſapphire, and ſhew the diamond glittering in its rock; let them all be thrown into the balance; alas! their weight is too little and too light.—Let the pageantries of ſtate be added, imperial titles, and the enſigns of majeſty; put in all that boundleſs vanity imagines, or wild ambition craves, crowns and ſceptres, regal veſtments and golden thrones,—the ſcale ſtill mounts,—Throw in the world entire—'tis unſubſtantial, and light as airy vanity.

Are theſe thy higheſt boaſts, O deluding world?—Ye miniſters of darkneſs, have you nothing elſe to offer? Are theſe your utmoſt propoſals? Are theſe a compenſation for the FAVOUR OF GOD? Alas! that boundleſs word has a meaning which out-weighs them all: infinite delight, unconceivable joy are expreſſed in it; the

the light of his countenance signifies more than angels can describe, or mortality imagine: and shall I quit all that an everlasting heaven means, for empty shadows?

Go ye baffled tempters, go offer your toys to madmen and fools; they all vanish under my scorn, and cannot yield so much as an amusement to my aspiring thoughts. The sun in all his spacious circuit, beholds nothing to tempt my wishes. These winding skies in all their ample round contain nothing equal to my desires; my ambition has far different ends, and other prospects in view; nothing below the joys of angels can satisfy me.

Let me explore the worlds of life and beauty, and find a path to the dazzling recesses of the Most High: let me drink at the fountain-head of pleasure, and derive all that I want from original and uncreated fulness and felicity.

O divine love! let me launch out into thy pleasureable depths, and be swallowed up of thee: let me plunge at once in immortal joy, and lose myself in the infinite ocean of happiness.

Till then I pine for my celestial country; till then I murmur to the winds and streams, and tell the solitary shades my grief. The groves are conscious to my complaints, and the moon and stars listen to my sighs; by their silent lights I talk over my heavenly concerns, and give a vent to my divine affections in mortal language; then looking

looking upward, I grow impatient to reach the milky way, the ſeats of joy and immortality.

Come love, come life, and that bleſs'd day
For which I languiſh, come away
When this dry ſoul, theſe eyes ſhall ſee,
And drink the unſeal'd ſource of thee.

Oh come, I cry, thou whom my ſoul loveth: I would go on, but want expreſſion, and vainly ſtruggle with the unutterable thought.

Tell me, you ſons of light, who feel the force of theſe celeſtial fires, in what language you paint their ſacred violence? Or do the tongues of ſeraphs faulter? Does the language of paradiſe want emphaſis here, and immortal eloquence fail? Surely your happineſs is more perfect than all your deſcriptions of it: heaven echoes to your charming notes as far as they reach, while divine love, which is all your ſong, is infinite, and knows no limits of degree or duration.

Yet I would ſay, ſome gentle ſpirit, come and inſtruct me in your art; lend me a golden harp, and guide the ſacred flight; let me imitate your devout ſtrains, let me copy your harmony, and then

Some of the faireſt choir above,
Shall flock around my ſong,
With joy to hear the name they love
Sound from a mortal tongue.

Bleſſed

Bleſſed and immortal creatures, I long to join with you in your celeſtial ſtyle of adoration and love, I long to learn your extaſies of worſhip and joy in a language which mortals cannot pronounce, and to ſpeak the divine paſſion of my ſoul in words which are now unſpeakable.

XX. *Self-reproof for inactivity.*

IS it poſſible that I ſhould one day be rapt almoſt to the third heavens, and ere a few weeks have paſſed over me, I ſhould find myſelf creeping among the inſects of the earth, and almoſt as meanly buſied as they? Can divine love, which exalted me lately into flaming tranſports, ſo far ſubſide and grow cool within me? Can it leave me ſo unactive as I now feel myſelf? What ſhall I do to ſhame my conſcience with reproaches, and renew my flame to religious zeal and vigour.

Alas! how does the activity of men about the little affairs of human life condemn my negligence in matters of everlaſting conſequence? Does the fond lover with ſuch anxiety and impatience purſue the object of his wiſhes, and ſhall not divine beauty and infinite lovelineſs inflame my deſires to a nobler height, and excite my languiſhing devotion?

Are the ambitious ſo reſtleſs and ſolicitous to make themſelves great and to purchaſe the veneration

ration of fools? Do they lay such mighty projects, and compass their designs with such pains and difficulty, for mere pageantry and gaudy trifles; and shall I, who am a candidate for heaven, a probationer for celestial dignity, lose my title for want of diligence? Shall I faint in the noble strife when God and angels are ready to assist me, and every moment's toil will be recompensed with eternal ages of rest and triumph?

See, see, the moments fly, the labour shortens, and the immense reward draws near; the palm of victory, the starry crown are in view; the happy realms and fields of light entertain me with their glorious prospect. Rouze thee, my soul, to the most active pursuit of these felicities: waken all thy sprightly powers, and let it never, never be thy reproach, that the vigour and intenseness of thy desire, or that thy holy industry should sink so far below the fervour of those affections, which in a devout hour thou hast pronounced inexpressible.

O Lord, what a mutable thing is man? what frailty works in this flesh and blood, and hangs heavy upon our better powers? 'Tis grace, divine grace alone, can keep alive that immortal spark within us, which came first from heaven, and first taught our hearts to arise and spring upward. Preserve and complete thy own work, Almighty Grace.

XXI.

XXI. *A joyful view of approaching death.*

O Death, where is thy sting? where is thy boasted victory? the conquest is mine; I shall pass in triumph through thy dark dominions, and through the grace of the Son of God, my divine leader, I shall appear there not a captive but a conqueror.

O king of terrors, where are thy formidable looks? I can see nothing dreadful in thy aspect: thou appearest with no tokens of defiance, nor dost thou come with summons from a severe judge; but gentle invitations from my blessed Redeemer, who has passed gloriously through thy territories, in his way to his throne.

Thrice welcome, thou kind messenger of my liberty and happiness! a thousand times more welcome than jubilee to the wretched slave, than pardon to a condemned malefactor: I am going from darkness and confinement to immense light and perfect liberty; from these tempestuous regions to the soft and peaceful climes above; from pain and grief to everlasting ease and tranquillity. For the toils of virtue, I shall immediately receive its vast rewards, for the reproach of fools, the honour and applause of angels. In a few minutes I shall be higher than yonder stars, and brighter far than they. I shall range the boundless ether, and breathe the balmy air of paradise.

I shall

I shall presently behold my glorious Maker, and sing hallelujahs to my exalted Saviour.

And now come, ye bright guardians of the just, conduct me through the unknown and trackless ether, for you pass and repass the celestial road continually; you have commission not to leave me till I arrive at Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God; till I come to the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

Hold out, faith and patience: 'tis but a little while and your work will be at an end; but a few moments and these sighs and groans shall be converted into everlasting hallelujahs: but a few weary steps and the journey of life will be finished. One effort more, and I shall have gained the top of the everlasting hills, and from yonder bright summit shall presently look back on the dangers I have escaped in my travels through the wilderness.

Roll faster on, ye lingering minutes; the nearer my joys the more impatient am I to seize them: after these painful agonies how greedily shall I drink in immortal ease and pleasure? Break away, ye thick clouds, begone ye envious shades, and let me behold the glories ye conceal: let me see the promised land, and survey the happy regions I am immediately to possess. How long will you interpose between me and my bright sun? between me and the unclouded face of God? Look up, my soul, see how sweetly those

thoſe reviving beams break forth! how they diſpel the gloom and gild the ſhades of death.

O bleſt eternity! with what a chearful ſplendor doſt thou dawn on my ſoul? With thee comes liberty, and peace, and love, and endleſs felicity; but pain, and ſorrow, and tumult, and death, and darkneſs vaniſh before thee for ever. I am juſt upon the ſhores of thoſe happy realms where uninterrupted day and eternal ſpring reſide: yonder are the delectable hills and harmonious vales which continually echo to the ſongs of angels. There the bliſsful fields extend their verdure, and there the immortal groves aſcend; but how dazzling is thy proſpect, O city of God, of whom ſuch glorious things are ſpoke? In thee "there ſhall be no more night, nor need of the "ſun or moon;" for the throne of God, and of the Lamb is in the midſt of thee, "and the "nations that are ſaved ſhall walk in thy light, "and the kings of the earth ſhall bring their "glory and honour into thee, and there the glo-"rious Lord ſhall be to us a place of defence, a "place of ſtreams and broad rivers," and the voice of joy, and ſhout of triumph ſhall be heard in thee for ever.

There holy ſouls perpetual ſabbaths keep,
And never are concern'd for food and ſleep:
There new-come ſaints with wreaths of light are crown'd,
While iv'ry harps and ſacred trumpets ſound:

There

There flaming ſeraphs ſacred hymns begin,
And raptur'd cherubs loud reſponſes ſing.

" My eyes ſhall there behold the king in his " beauty," and oh! how raviſhing will the aſpects of his love be? What unutterable extaſies ſhall I feel, when I meet thoſe ſmiles which enlighten heaven and exhilarate all the celeſtial regions? When ſhall I view the beatifick glory without one interpoſing cloud to eternity? When ſhall I drink my fill at the fountains of joy, and in thoſe rivers of pleaſure that flow from his right hand for ever?

XXII. *A devout reſignation of ſelf to the divine power and goodneſs.*

MY all-ſufficient friend, " my ſhield, and " my exceeding great reward!" I have enough: unbounded avarice can covet nothing beyond thee; the ſoul whom thou doſt not ſuffice, deſerves to be eternally poor. Thou art my ſupreme happineſs, my voluntary choice: I took thy love for my treaſure in that bleſt day when I entered into covenant with thee, and became thine: I made no articles with thee, for the friendſhips, the honours and pleaſures of the world; but ſolemnly renounced them all, and choſe thy favour for my ſingle inheritance, leaving the conduct of my life entirely to thee.

Theſe

These were my vows, and these I have often renewed; and shall I now retract such sacred obligations, and alter a choice so just and reasonable? Forbid it, gracious God! let me never be guilty of such madness; the world has often disappointed my most confident expectations, but thou hast never deceived me. In all my distress I have found thee a certain refuge, "my shield, "my fortress, my high tower, my deliverer, "my rock, and he in whom I trust." When there was none to save me, thy powerful hand has set me free; thou hast redressed my grievances, and dissipated my fears: thou hast brought me light out of obscurity, and turned my darkness into day.

When the world could afford me nothing but tempest and disorder, with thee I have found repose and undisturbed tranquillity. Thou hast been my long-experienced refuge, my unfailing confidence, and I steadily depend on thee for my future conduct. I cannot err when guided by thy infinite wisdom; I must be safe in the arms of eternal love, to which I humbly resign myself. Let me have riches or poverty, honour or contempt; whatever comes from thy hands shall be thankfully received. I would hear no voice but thine, nor make a step but where I am following thee.

If thou wouldst leave me to chuse for myself, I would resign the choice again to thee. I dread nothing more than the guidance of my own

own blind deſires; I tremble at the thoughts of ſuch a fatal liberty: avert, gracious God, that miſerable freedom. Thou foreſeeſt all events, and at one ſingle view doſt look through eternal conſequences; therefore do thou determine my circumſtances, not to gratify my own wild deſires, but to advance thy glory.

Thou haſt an unqueſtioned right to diſpoſe of me; I am thine by neceſſary ties and voluntary engagements, which I thankfully acknowledge and ſolemnly renew; deliberately and entirely I put myſelf into thy hands. Whatever intereſt I have in this world I ſacrifice to thee, and leave my deareſt enjoyments to thy diſpoſal, acknowledging it my greateſt happineſs to be guided by thee.

"Lord, what is man that thou art mindful "of him?" that thou who art ſupremely bleſſed, and independently happy, ſhouldſt concern thyſelf, with human affairs, and condeſcend to make our wants as much thy care as if mortal miſeries could reach thee, and interrupt immortal bleſſedneſs. Thou wouldſt make us ſenſible of thine indulgence of the moſt tender ſimilitudes: a father's gentle care but faintly ſhadows thine, and all we can conceive of human pity falls ſhort of thy compaſſion.

Thou doſt ſeem to ſhare of our calamities, and ſympathize in all our grief. No friend flies to our aſſiſtance with all the ſpeed that thy love

love brings thee, nor canſt thou ever want methods to relieve thoſe who confide in thee.

Thy providence finds or makes its way thro' all oppoſitions: the ſtreams ſhall roll back to their fountains, the ſun ſhall ſtand ſtill, and the courſe of nature be reverſed, rather than thou want means to bring thy purpoſes to paſs. No obſtacle puts a ſtand to thy deſigns, nor obſtructs thy methods: 'tis thy will that makes nature and neceſſity: who can ſtay thy hand, or ſay unto thee, "What doeſt thou?" Thy counſel ſhall ſtand, and thou wilt do all thy pleaſure. Nothing is impoſſible for thee to accompliſh; wherever I caſt my eyes, I ſee inſtances of thy power: the extended firmament, the ſun, and ſtars, tell me what thou art able to perform; they atteſt thy omnipotence and rebuke my unbelief. The whole creation pleads for thee, and condemns my infidelity.

Almighty God, forgive my diffidence, while I confeſs, 'tis moſt inexcuſeable. Thy hand is not ſhortened, nor are the ſprings of thy bounty ſealed; thy antient miracles have not exhauſted thy ſtrength, nor hath perpetual beneficence impoveriſhed thee; thy power remains undiminiſhed, and thy mercy endureth for ever. That dazzling attribute ſurrounds me with tranſporting glories: which way ſoever I turn I meet the bright conviction: I cannot recal a day of my paſt life on which ſome ſignature of thy goodneſs is not ſtamped.

Oh! who hath tasted of thy clemency
In greater measure or more oft than I?
Which way soe'er I turn my face or feet,
I see thy mercy and thy glory meet.

In whatever thou hast granted, or whatever thou hast denied me, thy beneficence has been mingled with every dispensation; thou hast not taken the advantage of my follies, nor been severe to my sins; but hast remembered my frame, and treated me with the utmost indulgence. Glory be to thy name for ever.

XXIII. *Redeeming love.*

ALmighty love, the name of every heavenly song! infinite grace, the wonder of angels! forgive a mortal tongue that attempts thy praise; and yet should man be silent, the mute creation would find a voice to upbraid him.

But oh! in what language shall I speak? with what circumstances shall I begin? Shall I roll back the volumes of eternity, and begin with the glorious design that determined man's redemption before the birth of time, before the confines of the creation were fixed?

Infinite years before the day,
Or heavens began to roll?

Shall

Shall I speak in general of all the nations of the redeemed? or to excite my own gratitude, shall I consider myself, my worthless self, included by an eternal degree among the number of those who should hear of a Redeemer's name, and be marked out a partaker of that immense privilege? Before the foundations of the hills were laid, the gracious design was formed, and the blessed plan of it schemed out before the curtains of the sky were spread.

Lord what is man? what am I? what is all the human race, to be thus regarded? O narrow thoughts; and narrow words! here confess your defects; these are heights not to be reached by you. Adorable measures of infinite clemency! unsearchable riches of grace! with what astonishment do I survey you! I am swallowed and lost in the glorious immensity. All hail, ye divine mysteries, ye glorious paths of the unsearchable Deity! let me adore, though I can never express you.

Yet should I be silent, heaven and earth, nay, hell itself would reproach me: the damned themselves would call me ungrateful, should I fail to celebrate that grace whose loss they are for ever lamenting: a loss that leaves them for ever desperate and undone. 'Tis this grace which tunes the harps of heaven, and yields them an immortal subject of harmony and praise. The spirits of just men made perfect fix their contemplations here; they adore the glorious

myſtery, and while they ſing the wonders of redeeming love, they aſcribe ſublime and living honours to him that ſits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. And infinitely worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive the grateful homage. Who ſhall not praiſe and magnify thy name? Who ſhall deny the tribute of thy glory?

But, alas! what can mortal man add to thee? What can nothingneſs and vanity give? We murmur from the duſt, and attempt thy praiſe from the depths of miſery; yet thou doſt condeſcend to hear and liſten to our broken accents; amidſt the hallelujahs of angels our groans aſcend to thee, our complaints reach thee: from the height of thy happineſs, and from the exaltations of eternal glory thou haſt regard to man, poor wretched man! thou receiveſt his homage, with delight; his praiſes mingle with the harmony of angels, nor interrupt the ſacred concord. Thoſe natives of heaven, thoſe morning-ſtars ſing together in their heavenly beatitudes, nor diſdain to let the ſons of earth and mortality join with them in celebrating the honours of Jeſus their Lord, and ours: to him be every tongue devoted, and let every creature for ever praiſe him. *Amen.*

XXIV. *Pleading for pardon and holineſs.*

IMmortal ſpring of life, the fountain of all exiſtence, the firſt and laſt, "without be-

"ginning

" ginning of days, or end of years;" before the heavens were created, thou waſt, and ſhalt remain unchanged while they wax old and decay. Thou art infinitely bleſſed in thyſelf, thy glory admits of no condition; the praiſes of angels cannot heighten thy happineſs, nor the blaſphemies of hell diminiſh it. Thou canſt do every thing, and thy power finds no obſtacle. " Thou " madeſt heaven and earth, the ſea, and the " fountains of water; thou doſt according to " thy will in the armies of heaven, and among " the inhabitants of the earth; thou holdeſt the " waters in the hollow of thy hand, and meaſureſt out the heavens with a ſpan: thou comprehendeſt the duſt of the earth in a meaſure, " and weigheſt the mountains in ſcales, and the " hills in a balance: thou covereſt thyſelf with " light, as with a garment," and art ſurrounded with inacceſſible ſplendor: " thou art glorious " in holineſs, fearful in praiſes; the heavens " are not clean in thy ſight, and thou chargeſt " thine angels with folly: what then is man " that drinks in iniquity like water? What is " man that thou art mindful of him; or the " ſon of man, that thou doſt thus viſit him?" 'Tis becauſe thou art good, and thy mercy endureth for ever; mercy is thy prevailing attribute. Thou art compaſſionate and infinitely gracious, and haſt fully manifeſted thy love and beneficence to the race of man in the glorious me-

thods of our redemption from everlasting bondage and death by thy Son Jesus.

Therefore with the lowest reverence, and most humble gratitude, I desire to prostrate myself before thee, acknowledging it my greatest honour, and undeserved privilege, to approach the Lord, and bow myself before the high God; I that am unworthy to utter thy tremendous name, or once to lift my eyes to heaven. To my own confusion, I here confess I have abused the mercy which I now implore, and injured that goodness and forbearance by my sins which I am now addressing myself to. I have forfeited the very benefits I ask, and despised those sacred privileges which I am forced to plead: I can use scarce any motive but what would carry in it my own condemnation. Shall I implore thy mercy by the gracious terms of the new covenant, sealed by the blood of thy eternal Son? alas, that gracious covenant I have violated, and profaned its sacred seals: I have sinned against the clearest light, and tendrest instances of love: I have not only broken my obligations to thee as a Creator; but the strongest engagements of thy adoption, even the glorious privilege of being admitted into thy family, and numbered among the children of God.

But still those very circumstances that aggravate my guilt, exalt thy mercy; here the freeness and magnificence of thy grace will display itself; here thou wilt answer the indulgent title of a father

ther in its tendereſt extent; I have no ſins too great for infinite clemency to pardon. Thou art God, and not man; and as the heavens are high above the earth, ſo high are thy ways of compaſſion above all human methods.

I dare not ſet bounds to thy goodneſs, nor affirm, that "thus far, and no farther, divine patience extends. Thou haſt pardoned and reſtored me to thy favour too often for me now to deſpair: my penitent ſighs were never rejected, nor my humble requeſts unanſwered: I have always found the heavens open, and the throne of God acceſſible, through the blood of my Redeemer. By his agony and bloody ſweat, by his croſs and paſſion, by his painful death and glorious reſurrection, I implore thy pardon: he has made a full atonement, and divine juſtice will demand no further ſatisfaction. "To him give "all the prophets witneſs, that through his "name, whoſoever believes in his name ſhall re-"ceive remiſſion of ſins."

O bleſſed Jeſus! the hope of the Gentiles, the ſalvation of the ends of the earth; the great Meſſiah, the promiſed Saviour, who doſt anſwer thoſe glorious titles in their utmoſt ſignification; to thee, my certain, my experienced refuge, I fly; O Son of God, hear me; O Lamb of God, who takeſt away the ſins of the world, have mercy on me.

O Eternal Spirit, the promiſed Comforter, come with all thy ſacred conſolations: come, and

be as dew to the drooping flowers, as rain to the parched ground; oh! come with thy reviving light, and diſpel the darkneſs that beclouds my ſoul: break in like the ſun after a melancholy night; one beam of thine would melt this frozen, this obdurate heart, and kindle in my ſoul the ſpark of holy love; breathe upon my cold affections, and raiſe them to a ſacred flame.

Searcher of hearts, from whom nothing is concealed, whoſe penetrating eyes find out hypocriſy in its darkeſt diſguiſe: thou knoweſt the deſires of my ſoul, and art my impartial witneſs that I kneel not here for the riches and honours of the world; that I am not proſtrate before thee for the length of days or pleaſure; but that 'tis the kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof, that I ſeek. Give me not my portion with the rich and great, but let me have my humble lot with thy children; let me bear contempt and deriſion, and ſuffer reproach with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon.

Thy favour is the end of all my wiſhes, the conſtant ſubject of my prayer. Oh! thou whoſe ears are open to the wants of all thy creatures, who heareſt the young ravens when they cry from their neſt to thee, who giveſt the men of the world the tranſitory things they chuſe, wilt thou deny the deſire which thou thyſelf doſt inſpire and approve? O let me be filled with that righteouſneſs which I hunger and thirſt after, and

be

be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs. Thou canſt not be diminiſhed, whatever perfection thou doſt communicate to the creature; endleſs liberality could not make thee poor.

I ask no privileges above the capacity of my nature, nor aſpire to the perfections of angels: I only beg that I may reach thoſe heights of holineſs and divine love, which ſouls inveſted with a mortal body like mine, and encumbered with the ſame human paſſions, have attained. But in vain I ſtrive to imitate thoſe bright examples thou haſt ſet before me; without thy aſſiſtance all my endeavours will prove ſucceſsleſs. Thou knoweſt the frailty of my nature, and the mighty difficulties I have to encounter: I have not only the allurements of the world but all the ſtratagems of hell to engage with, and a treacherous heart within, ready on all occaſions to betray me into ſin and endleſs perdition: O let my impotence and danger awaken thy compaſſion.

Remember thy former benignity, O Lord, and let that engage thee to grant me new ſupplies of that grace, by which alone I ſhall prove victorious. Thy bounty to any of the works of thy hands muſt always flow from the goodneſs of thy own nature; for what creature can pretend to merit any thing from thee? I could urge nothing but thy own infinite mercy, when I intreat thee not to let me periſh, after the wonderful things thou haſt done for my ſoul; after all the pledges thou haſt given me of thy love, let not

my follies provoke thee to forſake me; but remember thy covenant, and its gracious articles, and act according to thy own ineffable benignity which has been the glorious motive of every favour I have received from thee.

XXV. *A tranſport of gratitude for ſaving mercy.*

I Bleſs a thouſand times the happy day when firſt a beam of heavenly light broke in on my ſoul, when the day-ſtar from on high viſited me, and the celeſtial light began to dawn, I welcomed its chearful luſtre, and felt the ſacred influence; the flames of holy love awoke, and holy joys were kindled.

The earth and all its pageantry diſappeared like clouds before the morning ſun: the ſcenes of Paradiſe were opened,—ſeraphic pleaſures and unutterable delights: all hail, I cried, you unknown joys, you unexperienced pleaſures! compared to you what's all I have reliſhed till now? what's earthly beauty and harmony? what's all that mortals call charming and attractive? I never lived till now: I knew no more than the name of happineſs till now: I have been in a dream during all the days of my folly and vanity, but now I awake to the life of heaven-born ſpirits, and taſte the joys of angels.

XXVI. *Importunate requests for the return of God to the soul.*

THOU great and glorious, thou invisible and universal Being, art thou no nearer to be approached? or do I search thee amiss? Is there a corner of the creation unvisited by thee, or any place exempt from thy presence? I trace thy footsteps thro' heaven and earth, but I cannot overtake thee.

Why do I seek thee, if thou art not here?
Or find thee not, if thou art every where?

Tell me, O my God, and my all, tell me where thou art to be found; for there is the place of my rest. What imaginable good can supply thy absence? Deprived of thee, all that the world could offer would be like a jest to a dying man, and provoke my aversion and disdain. 'Tis a God that I seek.

My wishes stoop not to a lower aim;
Thou, thou hast kindled this immortal flame,
Which nothing could allay.

Adieu, adieu to all human things! Let me find my God, the end of all my wishes: why

doſt thou keep back the face of thy throne? why does the cloud and ſacred darkneſs conceal thee?

Thy voice produc'd the ſeas and ſpheres,
Bid the waves roll, and planets ſhine;
But nothing like thyſelf appears
Thro' all theſe various works of thine.

O thou fairer than all the works of thy hands, wilt thou ever hide thyſelf from a creature that loves and ſeeks thee with ſo intenſe deſire? I appeal to thee, O Lord, are not my breathings after thee moſt hearty and unfeigned? does not my ſoul pant after thee with a fervour, which cannot be extinguiſhed, and a ſincerity which cannot be diſguiſed?

For thee I pine, and am for thee undone;
As drooping flow'rs that want their parent ſun.

How do my ſpirits languiſh for thee! No ſimilitudes can expreſs the vehemence of my deſires: wealth and glory, friends and pleaſure loſe their names compared to thee. To follow thee I would leave them all behind; I would leave the whole creation, and bid the fields and ſparkling ſkies adieu. Let the heavens and earth be no more, while thou endureth for ever, I can want no ſupport. My being itſelf, with all its bleſſedneſs, depends entirely on thee.

Place me far from the bounds of all creation, remote

remote from all existence but thy own; in that ineffable solitude let me be lost, let me expatiate there for ever, let me run the endless rounds of bliss—but, alas! I flatter myself in vain with scenes of unattainable happiness. I will search thee then, when I hope thou mayest be found. I cast my eyes to the happy beings that see thy face unveiled: I search thee in the flowery meadows, and listen for thee among the murmuring springs: then, silent and abstracted from human things I search thee in holy contemplation. 'Tis all in vain; nor fields, nor floods, nor clouds, nor stars reveal thee.

Ye happy spirits, that meet his smiles, and hear his voice, direct a mournful wanderer while I seek him whom my soul loves, while I sigh and complain, and cast my languishing eyes to yonder happy mansions; fain would I penetrate the starry pavilions, and look through the separating firmament: oh! that thou wouldst divide the clouds, that thou wouldst rend the heavens and give me one glimpse of thy glory! that thou wouldst display thy beauty, and in the midst of these earthly scenes of amusing vanity, give me one moment's interval of celestial blessedness.

One look of mercy from thy eye,
  One whisper of thy voice,
Exceed a whole eternity
  Employed in carnal joys.

Could

Could I the ſpacious earth command,
Or the more boundleſs ſea,
For one dear hour at thy right-hand
I'd give them both away.

If things were put in juſt balances, and computed aright, for the firſt moment of this ſatisfaction I am ready to ſay, the whole creation would be cheaply loſt; how gladly would I reſign all for ſuch a bliſs! Adieu to human things; let me find my God, the end of all my wiſhes: 'tis he whom I ſeek, 'tis he alone can ſatisfy my infinite deſires. Oh? why doſt thou withdraw? why thus long conceal thyſelf? where doſt thou retire? nor earth, nor heaven reply to my repeated calls.

Let me invoke thee by every gracious title, my God, and the God of my fathers, from one generation to another thou haſt been our dwelling-place; the claim has deſcended from age to age; thy covenant has been eſtabliſhed with us, and thy faithfulneſs remains unblemiſhed. Oh! forget not thy covenant, forget not the bleſſings entailed on me; forget not the prayers and tears by which my pious anceſtors have engaged thy mercy for me, forget not their vows and ſolemn dedication of me to thee: oh! recal thy ancient favours, and renew thy former mercy to a family which has been thine in a ſucceſſion of ages.

Let me invoke thee now by a nearer propriety: my covenant God, my father, and my friend!

friend! if by all those tender names I have ever known thee, forget me not. By those sacred engagements, O Lord, I intreat thy return. If all thy past favours were real, if all was waking bliss, and not a gay delusion, O restore my heaven again. Life of my soul, light of my eyes, return; come and bring all thy sacred consolations; once again let me experience those holy joys that thy presence imparts; once again let me hear thy voice, and once again be blest with thy smiles.

Oh! hear, and to my longing eyes
  Restore thy wonted light;
And suddenly; or I shall sleep
  In everlasting night.

Blessed Saviour, in thee we behold the face of God, as a reconciled father; and dost thou withdraw thyself? O how welcome will thy returns be? how like the breakings of immortal day will thy presence cheer me? how dearly shall I prize my happiness? how fearful shall I be of every thing that would offend thee? how joyful in the blessed discovery and possession of thy love? I'd whisper of my bliss to the listening streams and groves:

I'd carve thy passion on the bark,
And every wounded tree

Shall

Shall droop and bear ſome myſtick mark
That Jeſus dy'd for me.
The ſwains ſhall wonder when they read,
Inſcrib'd on all the grove,
That heaven itſelf came down and bled
To win a mortal's love.

But why do I flatter myſelf with theſe delightful ſcenes? I find thee abſent ſtill: I mourn and complain as one unpitied: what is life while thou art abſent? Oh! return and bleſs me with thy preſence, thou who knoweſt my diſtreſs, and art acquainted with my ſecret cares. Thou who art the witneſs of my midnight ſighs, and doſt hear when at the dawning day I call thee; but ſtill thou anſwereſt not, and ſeemeſt deaf to my prayers. I am, 'tis true, a worthleſs wretch; but, vile as I am, thou haſt in thy immenſe compaſſion brought me into covenant with thee: "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

He is my ſun, tho' he refuſe to ſhine;
Tho' for a moment he depart,
I dwell for ever on his heart,
For ever he on mine.

Nothing can break the ſacred union; but for this confidence I were undone; but for this beam of hope I were loſt in eternal darkneſs. "Why art thou diſquieted, O my ſoul, and "why art thou caſt down within me? Hope in "God,

" God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the light " of his countenance." I ſhall yet welcome his return, I ſhall yet hear his chearing voice, and meet his favourable ſmiles.

But why, O my God, this long ſuſpence? Why do theſe intervals of night and darkneſs abide upon me and torment my heart ſo long? Wilt thou deny a bliſs ſo eaſily granted? I aſk no more than is lawful for mortality to wiſh: I aſk not the viſions of angels here below; nor the beatitudes of perfected ſpirits, I ask but what thou haſt bid me ſeek, and given me hopes to obtain; I ask that ſacred fellowſhip, that ineffable communion with which thou favoureſt thy ſaints.

Oh! let me hear thoſe heavenly whiſpers that give them the fortaſtes of immortal pleaſures; let me be ſenſible of thoſe divine approaches that kindle celeſtial ardour in their ſouls; let me meet thoſe beams that darken all mortal beauty; let me enjoy, at this earthly diſtance, thoſe ſmiles that are the bliſs of angels in heaven. Though 'tis but darkly, and afar off, yet let me feel their influence: 'twill brighten the paſſage of life, it will direct me thro' its mazes, and gild its rough and gloomy paths; 'twill raiſe the flames of ſacred love, it will waken to divine principle within me, and ſet it a glowing through all my powers. I abandon, I ſhall forget the vanities below, and the glories of the world will be no more. But while thou, O my God, hideſt thy face,

face, I lose my sun, I languish and die: yet to thee I will lift up my eyes, to thee I lift up my soul.

Come, Lord, and never from me go,
This world's a darksome place:
I find no pleasure here below,
When thou dost veil thy face.

XXVII. *Breathing after GOD, and weary of the world.*

'TIS no mean beauty of the ground
That has allur'd my eyes:
I faint beneath a nobler wound,
Nor love below the skies.

If words can reach the heights of love and gratitude, let me pour out the sacred ardour of my soul: O let it not offend thy greatness, that dust and vanity adores and loves thee. If thou hadst given me other capacities, and formed any thing more suitable to my wishes, I might have found a lower happiness, and been content with something below the infinite Deity; but the scanty creation affords nothing to satisfy me, and I will follow thee by a divine instinct and mere necessity of nature.

My life is useless, and my being insignificant without thee: my reason has no proper employment;

ment; love, the nobleſt paſſion of my ſoul, has no object to anſwer its dignity. I am reduced to abſolute poverty; my nature is entirely ruined, I am loſt, eternally loſt, undone, and abandoned to deſpair, if I am deprived of thee. There can be no reparation made for an infinite loſs; nothing can be inſtead of God to my ſoul.

I have willingly renounced all things elſe for thy ſake: all the ſentiments of tenderneſs and delight that my ſoul ever feels for an earthly object, is mere indifference, compared to my love for thee; and grows into hatred when that object ſtands as thy rival or competitor. This is the conquering the ſuperior flame that draws in and ſwallows up all the other ardours of my nature. My engagements with all terreſtrial things, are broken; the names of father, of brother, or of friend are no more: abſtracted from thee, theſe tender titles give me neither confidence, nor joy, and are mere inſignificant names, but as thou doſt give them an emphaſis; they are nothing at all without thee; and with thee, what infinite good can be an addition?

The ſoul can hold no more for God is all
He only equals its capacious graſp,
He only overfills to ſpaces infinite.

Thou art my God, and I have enough; my ſoul is ſatisfied, I am entirely at reſt. Divide the vain, the periſhing creation to the miſerable wretches

wretches that ask no other portion; let them unenvied poſſeſs the honours, and riches, and pleaſures of the world, with a laviſh hand divide them away: theſe things are but as the duſt of the balance to the happy ſoul that knows what the light of thy countenance imports. After that there can be no reliſh left for the low delights of mortality.

Loſt in the high enjoyments of thy love,
What glorious mortal could my envy move?

You ineffable delectations of divine love, let me have no ſentiment of pleaſure left but for you. My God revealing his glories and his grace, in Jeſus Chriſt his Son, is ſufficient for my eternal entertainment.

What if all former ideas of viſible things were wiped from my ſoul? what if I had no imagination, no memory, no traces left of any thing but the joys I have found in thy preſence, and the aſſurances of thy everlaſting favour? Thoſe are the only paſt moments I recal with pleaſure, and oh! let all the vaſt eternity before me be ſpent in theſe ſatisfactions.

Vaniſh, ye terreſtrial ſcenes! fly away, ye vain objects of ſenſe! I reſign all thoſe poor and limited faculties by which you are enjoyed; let me be inſenſible of all your impreſſions, if they do not lead me to my God. Let chaos come again, and the fair face of nature become an uni-

verſal

verſal blank; let her glowing beauties all fade away, and thoſe divine characters ſhe wears be effaced. I ſhall yet be happy; the God of nature, and the original of all beauty is my God.

What if the ſun were extinguiſhed in the skies, and all the ethereal lamps had burnt out their golden flames, I ſhall dwell in light and immortal day, for my God will be ever with me. When the groves ſhall no more renew their verdure, nor the fields and valleys boaſt any longer their flowery pride; when all theſe lower heavens, and theſe material images of things are no more; I ſhall ſee new regions of beauty and pleaſure for ever opening themſelves in the divine eſſence with all their original glories.

But oh! how various, how boundleſs, how tranſporting will the proſpect be? Oh! when ſhall I bid adieu to phantoms and deluſions, and converſe with eternal realities? when ſhall I drink at the fountain-head of eſſential life and bleſſedneſs?

——————————" And then
" O what!—But ask not of the tongues of man
" For angels cannot tell—Let it ſuffice,
" Thyſelf, my ſoul, ſhall feel thy own full joys,
" And hold them faſt for ever."

Oh! break my fetters, for I muſt be gone. Bring my ſoul out of priſon; I am ſtraitened; the whole creation is too narrow for me; I ſicken at this confinement, and groan and pant for liberty.

berty. How sweet are the thoughts of enlargement? My soul is already on the wing, and practises imaginary flights: I seem to reach the heaven of heavens, where God himself resides. It is good for me to be here———

But ah! how soon the clouds of mortal sense
Arise, and veil the charming vision?

Alas! what do I here in this waste and dreadful wilderness, this dismal region, where our delights are vanishing, and the very glimpses of future felicity we enjoy are so soon overshaded and surrounded with real horrors? Alas! what do I here, wasting that breath in sighs and endless complaints, that was given me to bless and praise the infinite Creator? Alas! what do I here, among strangers and enemies, in this wild unhospitable place, far from my home, and all the objects of my solid delight,

My wishes, hopes, my pleasures and my love,
My thoughts, and noblest passions are above.

What do I here, in the dominions of death and sin, in the precincts and range of the powers of darkness? Here they lay their toils, and set their fatal snares; but, Lord, what part have they in me? I have bid defiance to the powers of darkness in thy strength, and renounced my share in the vanities of the world. I am a subject of another kingdom,

kingdom, and dare not enter into any terms of peace and amity with the irreconcileable adversaries of God and my soul, which inhabit these treacherous and sinful regions. "The friendship "of this world is enmity with God." Death and destruction are in its smiles; I stand on my guard, and am every moment in danger of surprize: Oh! when will my deliverance come from on high?

——————When, my soul,
O when shall thy release from cumb'rous flesh
Pass the great seal of heaven? What happy hour
Shall give thy thoughts a loose to soar and trace
The intellectual world?

What glorious scenes shall open when once this mortal partition falls, when these walls of clay shall totter and sink down into dust? Ye waters of life, ye torrents of immortal pleasure, how impetuously will you then roll in upon me, and swell and fill up all the capacities of joy in my nature? Every faculty shall then be filled: and every wish shall end in unutterable fruition. "When I awake" into immortal light, "I shall "be satisfied with thy likeness." These expressless desires will die into everlasting raptures: hope and languishing expectation will be no more: but present, complete, and unbounded satisfaction will surround me. My God, my God himself shall be my infinite, my unutterable joy; all the

the avenues of pleasure shall be open before me, the scenes of beauty and prospects of delight. "Everlasting joy shall be upon my head, and sor-"row and sighing shall fly away for ever."

There will be no more intervals of grief and sin; sin, that insupportable evil, that worst, that heaviest burden; here the painful and deadly pressure lies: 'tis this that hangs as a weight on all my joys; but thanks be to my God, I can say, I sincerely detest and hate this vilest of slaveries, this cursed bondage of corruption; I long for the glorious liberty of the sons of God; I groan under this load of flesh, this burden of mortality, this body of death.

But grant, O Lord, I may with patience continue in well-doing, and at last obtain glory and immortality through my Redeemer's righteousness. "Sanctify me through thy word of truth," remember this request of my glorious advocate.

XXVIII. *A prayer for speedy sanctification.*

O Lord God, great and holy, all-sufficient and full of grace, if thou shouldst bid me form a wish, and take whatsoever in heaven or earth I had to ask, it should not be the kingdoms of this world, nor the crowns of princes: no, nor should it be the wreathes of martyrs, nor the thrones of archangels: my first request is to be made holy; this is my highest concern. Rectify the disorders sin has made in my soul, and renew

renew thy image there; let me be satisfied with thy likeness. Thou hast compassed my paths with mercy in all other respects, and I am discontented with nothing but my own heart; because it is so unlike the image of thy holiness, and so unfit for thy immediate presence.

Permit me to be importunate here, O blessed God, and grant the importunity of my wishes; let me be favoured with a gracious and speedy answer, for I am dying while I am speaking: the very breath with which I am calling upon thee, is carrying away part of my life: this tongue that is now invoking thee, must shortly be silent in the grave: these knees that are bent to pay thee homage, and these hands that are now lifted to the most high God for mercy, must shortly be mouldering to their original dust: these eyes will soon be closed in death, which are now looking up to thy throne for a blessing. Oh! prevent the flying hours with thy mercy, and let thy favour out-strip the hasty moments.

Thou art unchanged, while rolling ages pass along; but I am decaying with every breath I draw: my whole allotted time to prepare for heaven is but a point, compared with thy infinite duration. The shortness and vanity of my present being, and the importance of my eternal concerns join together to demand my utmost solicitude, and give wings to my warmest wishes. Before I can utter all my present desires, the hasty opportunity perhaps is gone, the golden mi-

nute vaniſhed, and the ſeaſon of mercy has taken its everlaſting flight.

Oh! God of ages, hear me ſpeedily, and grant my requeſt while I am yet ſpeaking; my frail exiſtence will admit of no delay; anſwer me according to the ſhortneſs of my duration, and the exigence of my circumſtances. My buſineſs; of high importance as it is, yet is limited to the preſent *now*, the paſſing moment; for all the powers on earth cannot promiſe me the next.

Let not my preſſing importunity therefore offend thee; my happineſs, my everlaſting happineſs, my whole being is concerned in my ſucceſs: as much as the enjoyment of God himſelf is worth, is at ſtake.

Thou knoweſt, O Lord, what qualifications will fit me to behold thee; thou knoweſt in what I am defective; thou canſt prepare my ſoul in an inſtant, to enter into thy holy habitation: I breathe now, but the next moment may be death: let not that fatal moment come before I am prepared. The ſame creating voice that ſaid, "Let there be light," and there was light, can in the ſame manner purify and adorn my ſoul, and make me fit for thy own preſence; and my ſoul longs to be thus purified and adorned. O Lord, delay not; for every moment's interval is a loſs to me, and may be a loſs unſpeakable and irreparable. Thy delay cannot be the leaſt advantage to thee; thy power and thy clemency are as full this preſent inſtant, as they will be the next,

next, and my time as fleeting, and my wants as preſſing.

Remember, O eternal God, my loſt time is for ever loſt, and my waſted hours will never return, my neglected opportunities can never be recalled; to me they are gone for ever, and cannot be improved; but thou canſt change my ſinful ſoul into holineſs, by a word, and ſet me now in the way to everlaſting improvement.

O let not the ſpirit of God reſtrain itſelf, but bleſs me according to the fulneſs of thy own being, according to the riches of thy grace in Chriſt Jeſus, according to thy infinite unconceivable love manifeſted in that glorious gift of thy beloved Son, wherein the fulneſs of the Godhead was contained: 'tis through his merit and mediation I humbly wait for all the unbounded bleſſings I want or aſk for.

XXIX. *Gratitude for early and peculiar favours.*

LET me trace back thy mercy, O my God, from the firſt early dawn of life, and bleſs thee for the privileges of my birth, that it was not in the lands of darkneſs; where no ray of the goſpel had ever darted its light; where the name of a Saviour never had reached my ears, nor the tranſporting tidings of redemption from eternal miſery had ever bleſſed my ſoul.

But how ſhall I expreſs my gratitude for that grace which ordained my lot in this happy land,

one of the islands of which it was long since prophesied, " they should see thy glory, and trust " in thy name? God has enlarged Japhet," even the islands of the sea, " and made him to dwell " in the tents of Shem," in the inheritance of Abraham. I have my descent from the Gentiles, who were once " strangers to the covenant of " grace, aliens from the commonwealth of " Israel;" but are now brought nigh by the blood of sprinkling. Jesus, the great peace-maker, hath brought both near to God, and to each other.

I bless thee with all my powers, for the privilege of my descent from pious ancestors; that thou hast been their dwelling-place from generation to generation, and hast not " taken thy lo- " ving-kindness from their seed, nor suffered thy " faithfulness to fail."

Thou hast extended thy mercy to me, the last and least of all my father's house, unworthy to wipe the feet of the meanest of the servants of my Lord; and yet by an absolute act of goodness, I am brought into thy family, and numbered with the children of God. Even so it has seemed good in thy sight, who " art gracious to " whom thou wilt be gracious."

I might have been a vessel of wrath, a trophy to thy justice, instead of a monument of thy mercy; how unsearchable are thy ways! how uncontrouled and free! Thou didst regard me in my lost estate, in more than my original guilt and misery;

misery; for I had improved the wretched stock, and been a voluntary, as well as a natural slave to sin and death.

From this ignominious slavery, thou, my great Redeemer, hast ransomed me, and brought me into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; I was a stranger, and thou didst take me in: naked, and thou hast clothed me with the spotless robes of thy own righteousness: I was hungry, and thou didst feed me; thirsty, and thou didst give me to drink of the fountain of life.

What am I, O Lord, and what is my father's house, that thou hast dealt thus graciously with me, in entering into an everlasting covenant signed and sealed, even sensibly sealed to my soul by the witness of thy spirit? Lord, why me rather than many that were companions of my early vanities and folly? whence were the motives drawn but from thy sovereign pleasure? how many are past by, that could have done thee more service, and returned a warmer acknowledgment to thy distinguished bounty?

Ye spirits of just men made perfect, ye ransomed nations, triumphant above, instruct me in the art of celestial eloquence: tell me in what strains of sacred harmony you express your gratitude for this glorious redemption, while in exalted raptures you sing "to him that loved and "washed you in his own blood, and made you "kings and priests to God.

XXX. *Aspiring after the vision of GOD in heaven.*

I "Beseech thee shew me thy glory:" it was a mortal in a state of frailty and imperfection that made this bold, but pious request; which I repeat on different terms: since none can see thy face and live, let me die to behold it. This is the only request I have to make, and this will I seek after, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord, not as I have seen it in thy sanctuary below, but in full perfection and splendour, as thou art seen by seraphs and cherubs, by angels and arch-angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

O my God, forgive my importunity: thou hast commanded me to love thee with all my heart, my soul, my strength, and hast by thy spirit kindled the sacred flame in my breast: from this rises my present impatience; from hence the ardour of my desires spring. Can I love thee, and be satisfied at this distance from thee? can I love thee, and not long to behold thee in perfect excellence and beauty? is it a crime to press forward to the end for which I was created? All my wishes and my hopes of happiness terminate in thee.

Does not the thirsty traveller pine for some refreshing stream? would not the weary be at rest, or the wretched captive be free? and shall not

not the thirſty, weary, captive ſoul long for refreſhment, liberty and reſt? I am but a ſtranger, a pilgrim here, and have no abiding place; this is not my reſt, my home; and yet if thou haſt any employment for me, though the meaneſt office in thy family, I will not repine at my ſtay.

But, O Lord, thou haſt no need of ſuch worthleſs ſervice as I can pay thee; thy angels are ſpirits, thy miniſters flames of fire; thouſands of thouſands ſtand before thee, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand miniſter unto thee; they attend thy orders, and fly at thy command. O deliver me from this burden of mortality, and I will ſerve thee with a zeal as pure and active as theirs.

I can ſpeak of thy loving kindneſs to the children of men in a very imperfect manner; but then I will join with the celeſtial choir in praiſing thee, and rehearſe to liſtening angels what thou haſt done for my ſoul. Here I have a thouſand interruptions from the delightful work, a thouſand cold and darkſome intervals, a thouſand neceſſary diſtractions that riſe from the miſeries of mortality; but when theſe intervals of grief and ſin ſhall ceaſe, my ſoul ſhall dwell at eaſe, and be for ever glad, and rejoice in thy ſalvation.

XXXI. *A ſurrender of the ſoul to GOD.*

COmmand me what thou wilt, O Lord, give me but ſtrength to obey thee; be thy terms never ſo ſevere. O let us never part. I reſign my will, and liberty, my choice to thee; I ſtand diveſted of the world, and ask only thy love as my inheritance. Give, or deny me what thou wilt, I leave all the circumſtances of my future life in thy hands: let the Lord guide me continually: here I am, do with me what ſeemeth good in thy ſight, only do not ſay, "Thou "haſt no pleaſure in me."

Let me not live to diſhonour thee, to bring a reproach on thy name, to profane the blood of the Son of God, and grieve the ſpirit of grace. O take not thy loving-kindneſs from me, nor ſuffer thy faithfulneſs to fail. Thou haſt ſworn by thy holineſs, and thou wilt not lie to the ſeed of thy ſervants; thou haſt ſworn that the generation of the righteous ſhall "be bleſſed: "veſt me with this" character, O my God and fulfil this promiſe to a worthleſs creature.

XXXII. *Truſt and reliance on the divine promiſes.*

OLet not my importunity offend thee, for 'tis the importunity of faith; 'tis my ſteadfaſt

steadfast belief in thy word that makes me persist: thy word and thy oath, "the two immutable "things in which it is impossible to God to lie, "give me strong consolation."

'Tis this that makes me press forward to thy throne, thy wisdom, and thy faithfulness, on thy goodness and tender compassion, those glorious attributes for which "the children of men "put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." 'Tis thy glory to be the confidence of the ends of the earth, and it was long since predicted, "That in thy name the Gentiles should trust."

Kind guardian of the world, our heavenly aid,
To whom the vows of all mankind are paid—

We pay thee the highest homage, and exalt thy infinite attributes by faith and confidence in thee.

I know that *thou art*, and believe thee "a re-"warder of them that diligently seek thee." I will never quit my hold of thy promises, there I fix my hopes: I will not let a tittle go, nor part with a mite of thy glorious treasure, I humbly hope I have a rightful claim; thou art my God, and the God of my religious ancestors, the God of my mother, the God of my pious father: dying and breathing out his soul, he gave me to thy care, he put me into thy gracious arms, and delivered me up to thy protection. He told me thou wouldst never leave nor forsake me; he

triumphed in thy long-experienced faithfulness and truth, and gave his testimony for thee with his latest breath.

And now, O Lord God of my fathers, whose mercy has descended from age to age, whose truth has remained unblemished, and inviolable, and whose love remains without decay, O Lord, the faithful God and the true, keeping covenant and mercy to a thousand generations, let me find that protection and blessing that the prayers of my dying father engaged for me: now in the time of my distress, be a present help; and if thou wilt this once deliver me, thou alone shalt be my future trust, my counsellor, and hope; to thee I will immediately apply myself, and look on the whole force of created nature as insignificant. To thee I will devote all the blessings thou shalt give me, my time, my life, my whole of this world's goods; whatever share thou shalt graciously allot me shall surely be the Lord's.

Oh! hearken to the vows of my distress, and for thy own honour deliver me from this perplexity which thou knowest, and reveal to me the abundance of mercy and truth.

'Twas my dependence on thy promise and fidelity that brought me into this exigence; I staggered not at thy promises thro' unbelief, but boldly ventured on the credit of thy word: I took it for my security, and can the strength of Israel repent? Canst thou break thy covenant,

and

and alter the thing that is gone out of thy mouth.

" O God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and the " God of Jacob, this is thy name for ever, and " this thy memorial to all generations;" the God before whom my fathers walked, the God that fed me all my life long till now, and the angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless me. Let the God of Jacob be my help, let the Almighty bless me; let the blessings of my father " prevail above the blessing of his progenitors to " the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills."

Bless me according to thy own greatness, according to the unsearchable riches of thy grace in Christ Jesus; he is the spring of all my hope, in whom all the promises of God are Yea and Amen: he is the true and faithful witness, and has by his death sealed the divine veracity, and is become surety for the honour and faithfulness of the most high God. To this also the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, bears witness.

Oh! great Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the Lord God omnipotent, hear and grant my request, for the glory of thy mighty name, that name which saints and angels bless and love: let thy perfections be manifest to the children of men, let them say there is a God that judgeth in the earth: let them confess thou dost keep thy covenant with the seed of thy servants, that thy righteousness is from age to age, and thy salvation shall never be abolished; let

them see and acknowledge, that in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children have a place of refuge.

Unshaken as the sacred hill,
And firm as mountains be;
Firm as a rock the soul shall rest
That leans, O Lord, on thee.

Memorandum.

This act of faith in God was fully answered, and I leave my testimony, that "the name of "the Lord is a strong tower, and he knoweth "them that put their trust in him."

XXXIII. *Application to the divine truth.*

HOwever intricate and hopeless my present distress may be to human views, why should I limit the Almighty? or why should the Holy one of Israel limit himself? Nature and necessity are thine; thou speakest the word, and it comes to pass: no obstacle can oppose the omnipotence of thy will, or make thy designs ineffectual.

Is thy hand at all shortened since the glorious period, when thy mighty power, and thy stretched arm formed the heavens and earth; when these spacious skies were spread at thy command, and this heavy globe fixed on its airy pillars?

The strong foundations of the earth
Of old by thee were laid;
Thy hands the beauteous arch of heaven
With wond'rous skill have made.

"And

" And these shall wax old as a garment, as a " vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall " be changed;" but shouldst thou, like these decay, where were the hopes of them that confide in thee? If in all generations thy perfections were not the same, what consolation could the race of men draw from the ancient records of thy wonderful works? Why are we told, " thou " didst divide the sea, to make a path for thy " people through the mighty waters;" that thou didst " rain bread from heaven," and dissolve the flinty rock in crystal rills to give thy chosen nation drink?

Thou art he that distinguished Noah in the universal deluge, and preserved the floating ark amidst winds, and rains, and tumultuous billows.

'Twas thy protecting care led Abraham from his kindred and his native country, and brought him safely to the promised land.

Thou didst accompany Jacob in his journey to Padan-aram, and gave him bread to eat, and raiment to put on, till greatly increased in substance; he returned to his father's house, he wrestled for a blessing, he wrestled with the Almighty, and prevailed.

With Joseph thou wentest down into Egypt, and didst deliver him out of all his adversities, till he forgot his sorrows, and all the toil of his father's house.

Thou didst remember thy people in the Egyptian bondage, and look with pitying eyes on their affliction;

affliction; and, after four hundred and thirty years, on the very day thou hadst promised, didst release and bring them out with triumph and miracles. Thy presence went with them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and a protecting fire by night: thy conquering hand drove out great and potent nations, and gave them an entire possession of the land promised to their fathers: nor didst thou fail in the least circumstance of all the good things thou hadst promised.

What a cloud of witnesses stand on record? Joshua and Gideon, Jephtha and Samson, who through faith obtained the promises.

Thou didst command the ravens to feed thy holy prophet; and at the word of a prophet, didst sustain the widow's family with a handful of meal.

Thou didst walk with the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace: thou wast present with Daniel in the lion's den to deliver him, because he trusted in thee.

In what instance has the prayer of faith been rejected? Where were the righteous forsaken? Who can charge God, without charging him foolishly? What injustice has been found in the Judge of the earth? His glorious titles have stood unblemished from generation to generation; nor can any of his perfections decay, or rolling years make a change on the "Ancient of days."

Are not his words clear and distinct, without a double meaning, or the least deceit? Are they

not

not such as may justly secure my confidence? such as would satisfy me from the mouth of man, unconstant man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and his foundation in the dust unstable as water, and fleeting as a shadow? And can I so slowly assent to the words of the Most High? Shall I trust impotent man, that has neither wisdom nor might to accomplish his designs, that cannot call the next breath or motion his own, nor promise himself a moment in all futurity? Can I rest on these feeble props, and yet tremble and despond when I have the veracity of the eternal God to secure and support me?

I know he will not break his covenant, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail: I dare attest it in the face of earth and hell, I dare stake my all for time and eternity on this glorious truth, a truth which hell cannot blemish, nor all its malice contradict.

Exert yourselves, ye powers of darkness, bring in your evidence, collect your instances, begin from the first generations, since the world was peopled, and men began to call on the name of the Lord; when did they call in vain? When did the Holy One of Israel fail the expectation of the humble and contrite spirit? Point out in your blackest characters the dismal period, when the name of the Lord was no more a refuge to them that trusted in him. Let the annals of hell be produced, let them mark the dreadful day, and distinguish it with eternal triumphs.

In vain you ſearch; for neither heaven, nor earth, nor hell, have ever been witneſs to the leaſt deviation from truth or juſtice: the Almighty ſhines with unblemiſhed glory, to the confuſion of hell, and the conſolation of thoſe that put their truſt in him.

On thy eternal truth and honour I entirely caſt myſelf; if I am deceived, I am deceived; angels and archangels are deluded too; they, like me, have no dependance beyond the divine veracity for their bleſſedneſs and immortality; they hang all their hopes on his goodneſs and immutability; if that fails, the celeſtial paradiſe vaniſhes, and all its glories are extinct; the golden palaces ſink, and the ſeraphic thrones muſt totter and fall. Where are your crowns, ye ſpirits elect? Where are your ſongs and your triumphs, if the truth of God can fail? A mere poſſibility of that would darken the fields of light, and turn the voice of melody into grief and lamentation.

What pangs would riſe, even through all the regions of bleſſedneſs, what diffidence and fear would ſhake the heart of every inhabitant, what agonies ſurprize them all, could the word of the moſt high God be cancelled? The pillars of heaven might then tremble, and the everlaſting mountains bow, the celeſtial foundations might be moved from their place, and that nobleſt ſtructure of the hands of God be chaos, and eternal emptineſs.

But for ever "juſt and true are thy ways, thou "King

" King of ſaints; bleſſed are all they that put " their truſt in thee;" for thou art a certain refuge in the day of diſtreſs, and under the ſhadow of thy wings I will rejoice. " My ſoul ſhall " make her boaſt in the Lord, and triumph in " his ſalvation: I called on him in my diſtreſs, " and he has delivered me from all my fears." ——Hallelujah.

Here I diſmiſs my carnal hope,
My fond deſires recal;
I give my mortal intereſt up,
And make my God my all.

XXXIV. *Glory to GOD for ſalvation by JESUS, and his blood.*

LET me give glory to God before I die, and take ſhame and confuſion to myſelf. I aſcribe my ſalvation to the free and abſolute goodneſs of God; not by the ſtrength of reaſon, or any natural inclination to virtue, but by " the " grace of God I am what I am." O my Redeemer, be the victory, be the glory thine. I expect eternal life and happineſs from thee, not as a debt, but a free gift, a promiſed act of bounty. How poor would my expectations be, if I only look to be rewarded according to thoſe works which my own vanity, or the partiality of others, have called *good*, and which, if examined by the divine purity, would prove but ſpecious

ſins?

ſins? As ſuch I renounce them: pardon them, gracious Lord, and I ask no more; nor can I hope for that, but through the ſatisfaction which hath been made to divine juſtice for the ſins of the world.

O Jeſus, my Saviour, what harmony dwells in thy name! celeſtial joy, immortal life is in the ſound.

Sweet name! in thy each ſyllable,
A thouſand bleſs'd Arabias dwell;
Mountains of myrrhe, and beds of ſpices
And ten thouſand paradiſes.

Let angels ſet this name to their golden harps; let the redeemed of the Lord for ever magnify it.

O my propitious Saviour, where were my hopes but for thee? how deſperate, how undone were my circumſtances? I look on myſelf in every view I can take with horror and contempt. I was born in a ſtate of miſery and ſin, and in my beſt eſtate am altogether vanity. With the utmoſt advantage I can boaſt, I ſhrink back, I tremble to appear before unblemiſhed Majeſty. O thou in whoſe name the Gentiles truſt, be my refuge in that awful hour. To thee I come, my only confidence and hope. Let the blood of ſprinkling, let the ſeal of the covenant be on me. Cleanſe me from my original ſtain, and my contracted impurity, and adorn me with the robes of thy

thy righteouſneſs, by which alone I expect to ſtand juſtified, before infinite juſtice and purity.

O enter not into judgment with me, for the beſt actions of my life cannot bear thy ſcrutiny; ſome ſecret blemiſh has ſtained all my glory. My devotion to God has been mingled with levity and irreverence; my charity to man with pride and oſtentation. Some latent defect has attended my beſt actions, and thoſe very things which perhaps have been highly eſteemed by men, have deſerved contempt in the ſight of God.

" When I ſurvey the wond'rous croſs
" On which the Prince of glory dy'd;
" My richeſt gain I count my loſs,
" And pour contempt on all my pride.

" Forbid it, Lord, that I ſhould boaſt,
" Save in the croſs of Chriſt, my God:
" All the vain things that charm me moſt,
" I ſacrifice them to thy blood."

April 30, 1735.

XXXV. *A review of divine mercy and faithfulneſs.*

I Am now ſetting to my ſeal that God is true, and leaving this as my laſt teſtimony to the divine veracity. I can, from numerous experiences,

ences, assert his faithfulness, and witness to the certainty of his promises. "The word of the "Lord is tried, and he is a buckler to all those "that put their trust in him."

"O come, all you that fear the Lord, and I "will tell you what he has done for my soul; I "will ascribe righteousness to my Maker," and leave my record to a people yet unborn, that the generation to come may rise up and praise him.

Into whatever distress his wise providence has brought me, I have called on the Lord, and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears; I trusted in God, and he saved me. Oh! let my experience stand a witness to them that hope in his mercy; let it be to the Lord for a praise and a glory.

I know not where to begin the recital of thy numerous favours. Thou hast hid me in the secret of thy pavilion, from the pride of man, and from the strife of tongues, when by a thousand follies I have merited reproach thou hast graciously protected me, when the vanity of my friends, or the malice of mine enemies might have stained my reputation: thou hast covered me with thy feathers, and under thy wings have I trusted: thy truth has been my shield and my buckler; to thee I owe the blessing of a clear and unblemished name, and not to my own conduct, nor the partiality of my friends———— Glory be to thee, O Lord.

Thou

Thou hast led me through a thousand labyrinths, and enlightened my darkness. When shades and perplexity surrounded me, my light has broke forth out of obscurity, and my darkness been turned into noon-day. Thou hast been a guide and a father to me. When I knew not where to ask advice, thou hast given me unerring counsel: "The secret of the Lord has been "with" me, and he "has shewn me his cove-"nant."

In how many seen and unseen dangers hast thou delivered me? how narrow my gratitude? how wide thy mercy? how infinite the instances of thy goodness? how high above the ways and thoughts of man.

How often hast thou supplied my wants, and by thy bounty confounded my unbelief? Thy benefits have surprized and justly reproached my diffidence; my faith has often failed, but thy goodness has never failed. The world and all its flatteries have failed, my own heart and hopes have failed, but thy mercy endureth for ever, thy faithfulness has never failed.

The strength of Israel has never deceived me, nor made me ashamed of my confidence. Thou hast never been as a deceitful brook, or as waters that fail to my soul.

In loving-kindness, in truth, and in very faithfulness, thou hast afflicted me: Oh! how unwillingly hast thou seemed to grieve me? with how much indulgence has the punishment been

been mixed? Love has appeared thro' the disguise of every frown; its beams have glimmered thro' the darkest night; by every affliction thou hast been still drawing me nearer to thyself, and removing my carnal props, that I may lean with more assurance on the Eternal Rock.

Thy love has been my leading glory from the first intricate steps of life: the first undesigning paths I trod were marked and guarded by the vigilance of thy love; oh! whither else had my sin and folly led me?

How often have I tried and experienced thy clemency, and found an immediate answer to my prayers? Thou hast often literally fulfilled thy word: I have a fresh instance of thy faithfulness again: thou hast made me triumph in thy goodness, and given a new testimony to the veracity of thy promises.

And after all, what ingratitude, what insensibility reigns in my heart? Oh! cancel it by the blood of the covenant: root out this monstrous infidelity that still returns after the fullest evidence of thy truth. Thou hast graciously condescended to answer me in my own time and way, and yet I am again doubting thy faithfulness and care. Lord, pity me, "I believe, O "help my unbelief." Go on to succour, go on to pardon, and at last conquer my diffidence. Let me hope against hope, and in the greatest perplexity give glory to God, by believing what my own experience has so often found—"That

"the

" the ſtrength of Iſrael will not lie, nor is he as
" man, that he ſhould repent."

While I have memory and thought let his goodneſs dwell on my ſoul. Let me not forget the depths of my diſtreſs, the anguiſh and importunity of my vows: when every human help failed, and all was darkneſs and perplexity, then God was all my ſtay. Then I knew no name but his, and he alone knew my ſoul in adverſity. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits.

" Long as I live I'll bleſs thy name,
" My King, and God of love;
" My work and joy ſhall be the ſame
" In the bright worlds above."

I have yet a thouſand, and ten thouſand deliverances to recount, ten thouſand unaſked-for mercies to recal: no moment of my life has been deſtitute of thy care; no accident has found me unguarded by thy watchful eye, or neglected by thy providence. Thou haſt been often found, unſought by my ungrateful heart, and thy favour has ſurpriſed me with great and unexpected advantages: thou haſt compelled me to receive the bleſſings my fooliſh humour deſpiſed, and my corrupt will would fain have rejected. Thou haſt ſtopped thy ears to the deſires which would have ruined and undone me, when I might juſtly have been left to my own choice, for the puniſhment

niſhment of my many ſins and follies. How great my guilt! how infinite thy mercy!

Hitherto God has helped, and here I ſet up a memorial to that goodneſs which has never abandoned me to the malice and ſtratagems of my infernal foes, nor left me a prey to human craft or violence. The glory of his providence has often ſurprized me, when groping in thick darkneſs. With a potent voice he has ſaid, "Let there be light and there was light. He has made his goodneſs paſs before me, and loudly proclaimed his name, "the Lord, the Lord "God, merciful and gracious." To him be glory for ever, *Amen.*

XXXVI. *Some daily experiences of the gracious methods of divine Providence, to me the leaſt and moſt unworthy of all the ſervants of my Lord.*

FIRST WEEK. *

I.

EVery day's experience reproaches my unbelief, and brings me ſome new evidence of thy

* Note, The diviſion of theſe Meditations into ſevens by the pious writer, ſeems to tell us, that theſe were the devout thoughts of ſix weeks of her life.

thy faithfulness. Thou hast dispelled my fears, and, to the confusion of my spiritual foes, thou hast heard the voice of my distress. But a few hours ago, I was trembling and doubting, if thou wast indeed a God hearing prayer; and now I have a fresh instance of thy goodness, which with a grateful heart I here record. May the sense of thy benefits dwell for ever on my soul.

II.

Thy mercies are new every morning; again thou hast given me an instance of thy truth: "I "trusted in God, and he has delivered me: I "will love the Lord, because he has heard the "voice of my supplication; therefore will I call "on him as long as I live."

III.

"As for God, his way is perfect; the word "of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all that "put their trust in him." He has punctually fulfilled the word on which I relied: bless the Lord, O my soul.

IV.

Thy bounty follows me with an unwearied course: language is too faint to express thy praise: no eloquence can reach the subject. My heart is warm with the pious reflection; I look upward, and silently breathe out the unutterable gratitude that melts and rejoices my soul: I stag-

ger at thy promise, through unbelief, and yet thou hast graciously performed thy words. If we sometimes doubt or faulter in our faith, yet he abideth faithful who has promised.

V.

With the morning light my health and peace are renewed; the chearing influence of the sun, and the sweeter beams of the divine favour shine on my tabernacle—Lord, why me? Why am I rejoicing among the instances of sovereign grace, and unlimited clemency?

VI.

I boasted in thy truth, and thou hast not made me ashamed: my infernal foes are confounded, while my faith is crowned with success.

Oh! who hath tasted of thy clemency,
In greater measure, and more oft, than I?

VII.

As the week began, so it ends with a series of mercy: language and numbers fail to reckon thy favours, but this shall be my eternal employment.

When nature fails, and day and night,
Divide thy works no more,
My ever thankful soul, O Lord,
Thy goodness shall adore.

SE-

SECOND WEEK.

I.

"I Have seen the goings of God my King in "the sanctuary:" but O how transient the view! my sins turned back thy clemency, and yet I can celebrate the wonders of forgiving grace.

II.

What do I owe thee, O thou great Preserver of men, for easy and peaceful sleep, for nights unmolested with pain and anxiety.

Thou round my bed a guard dost keep:
Thine eyes are open while I sleep.

Not a moment slides in which I am unguarded by thy gracious protection.

III.

Thanks be to God, who has given me the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ. Thou hast delivered me from the snare of the fowler, the craft and malice of hell, and kept me back from sinning against thee, be thine the victory and praise, Hallelujah.

IV.

O Lord God of Israel, "happy is the man that

" putteth his truſt in thee." I left my burden at thy feet, and thou haſt ſuſtained me; my cares are diſſipated, my deſires anſwered. " O who is a " God like unto thee, near unto all that call on " thee!"

V.

Thy ſtrength is manifeſt in weakneſs: not " unto me, O Lord, but unto thee be all the " glory."

For ever thy dear charming name,
Shall dwell upon my tongue.
And JESUS and ſalvation be
The theme of every ſong.

This ſhall be my employment through an eternal duration: 'tis that alone can meaſure my gratitude. The Lord Jehovah is my ſtrength and ſalvation, he alſo ſhall be my ſong.

VI.

Every day's experience confirms my faith, and brings a freſh evidence of thy goodneſs. Thou haſt diſpelled my fears, and to the confuſion of my ſpiritual foes, hearkened to the voice of my diſtreſs.

VII.

I will love the Lord, who has heard my ſupplications. I made my boaſt in his faithfulneſs, and he has anſwered all my expectations.

THIRD

THIRD WEEK.

I.

MY last exigence will be the closing part of life, Oh! remember me then, my God. Thou who hast led me hitherto, forsake me not at last. Be my strength, when nature fails, and the flame of life is just expiring: let thy smiles chear that gloomy hour; oh! then let thy gentle voice whisper peace and ineffable consolation to my soul.

II.

In six and in seven troubles thou hast delivered me, and "been a cover from the tempest, a "hiding-place from the wind:" hitherto God has helped, and I have dwelt secure; and here I leave a memorial to thy praise, a witness against all my future distrust of thy faithfulness and truth.

III.

Every day of my life increases the sum of thy mercies; the rising and the setting sun, in its constant revolution, can witness the renewal of thy favours; thou wast graciously present in an imminent danger; by thee my bones have been kept entire, and thou hast not suffered me to dash my foot against a stone.

IV.

" Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is " within me, bleſs his holy name. Bleſs the " Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his bene- " fits; who heals thy diſeaſes, and pardons all " thy ſins." O thou, the great phyſician of my body, as well as of my diſtempered ſoul, thou haſt reſtored and ſaved me from death and hell. Bleſſed Jeſus, thou haſt " taken my infirmities, " and borne my ſickneſs; the chaſtiſement of " my peace was on thee, and by thy ſtripes I am " healed."

V.

I ſubſcribe to thy truth, O Lord; I atteſt in it contradiction to infernal malice, to all the helliſh ſuggeſtions that would tempt my heart to diffidence and unbelief, even againſt repeated experience, againſt the fulleſt evidence of the divine veracity.

VI.

Oh! thou, who never ſlumbereſt nor ſleepeſt, this night thy watchful care has kept me from a threatning danger; thy eyes were open, while I was ſleeping, ſecure beneath the covert of thy wings.

VII.

Another, and a greater deliverance has crown-

ed

ed the day: I have found thy grace sufficient in an hour of temptation, thy strength has been manifest in my weakness. Thine was the conquest; be the crown and the glory thine for ever. By thee I have triumphed over the stratagems of hell: "not unto me but to thy name be the "praise, O Lord."

FOURTH WEEK.

I.

'TIS not one of a thousand of thy favours I can record; but eternity is before me, and that unlimited duration shall be employed to rehearse the wonders of thy grace. Then in the great assembly I will praise thee, I will declare thy faithfulness, and tell to listening angels what thou hast done for my soul, even for me, the least of thy family, unworthy to wipe the feet of the meanest of the servants of my Lord.

II.

How numberless are thy thoughts of love to my soul! if I should count them, they are more than the sand on the shore: thou hast again reproved my unbelief, and given me a new conviction that my whole dependence is on thee; that second causes are nothing, but as thou dost give them efficacy; all nature obeys thee and is governed at thy command.

III. O

III.

O my God, I am again ready to diſtruſt thee, and call in queſtion thy faithfulneſs; oh! how deep has this curſed weed of infidelity rooted itſelf in my nature, but thou canſt root it out.

IV.

Again I muſt begin the rehearſal of thy mercies, which will never have an end; for thou doſt renew the inſtances of thy goodneſs to a poor ungrateful ſinner. Thou haſt punctually fulfilled the promiſe on which I depended: thou haſt granted the requeſt of my lips, and led me in a plain way that I have not ſtumbled.

V.

This day I have received an unexpected favour: I doubted the ſucceſs indeed, but thou haſt gently rebuked my unbelief, and convinced me that all things are poſſible with thee, and that the hearts of the children of men are in thy hands.

VI.

Whether thou doſt favour or afflict me, I rejoice in the glory of thy attributes, in whatever inſtance they are diſplayed. Be thy honour advanced, whether in mercy or juſtice; I muſt ſtill aſſert the equity of thy ways, and aſcribe righteouſneſs to my Maker. Yet let me plead with thee,

thee, O my God, since mercy is thy darling attribute, oh! let it now be exalted: deal not with me in severity, but indulgence; for if thou shouldst mark what is amiss, who can stand before thee?

VII.

Thou dost heal my diseases, and renew my life; thou art the guardian of my sleeping and my waking hours. Glory to my God whose eyes never slumber.

FIFTH WEEK.

I.

THOU knewest my secret grief, where my pain lies, and what are my doubts and difficulties. In thy wonted clemency, O Lord, dispel my darkness; leave me not to any fatal delusion in an affair of everlasting moment. This is my hour of information and practice; beyond the grave no mistake can be rectified; as the tree falls so it must for ever lie.

II.

Thy goodness still pursues me, O heavenly father, with an unwearied course; new instances of thy faithfulness reproach my unbelief. I sent up my petition with a doubting heart, and yet thou hast graciously deigned to encourage my weak

weak and ſtaggering faith, which has often wavered and failed, even in the view of the brighteſt evidence of thy power and truth.

III.

Thou doſt ſeem reſolved to leave my unbelief without excuſe, by renewing the glorious conviction of thy clemency and truth. O let not the unworthineſs of the object turn back thy benignity from its natural courſe.

IV.

How many unrecorded mercies have glided along with my fleeting moments into thoughtleſs ſilence, and long oblivion? How prone is my ungrateful heart to forget thy benefits, or, (oh! amazing guilt) to make an ungrateful return?

V.

Oh! never let my falſe heart relapſe into diſtruſt and unbelief again; thou haſt rebuked my folly, and put a new ſong of praiſe into my mouth; let thoſe infernal ſuggeſtions vaniſh that would once object againſt the oft-experienced truth. In this I would ſtill triumph and inſult all the malice of hell. A time will come when thou ſhalt be glorified in thy ſaints; when thy truth and faithfulneſs ſhall appear in full ſplendor, when the beauty of thy attributes ſhall be conſpicuous and clear from every blemiſh that the impiety

impiety of men, or the malice of devils have charged on thy moſt righteous providence.

VI.

Let me ſtill aſſert, that the ways of God are perfect juſtice and truth: I have a freſh inſtance of thy goodneſs to boaſt, and yet my ungrateful heart is even now ready to diſtruſt. The Lord increaſe my faith; let thy renewed favours ſilence my unbelief, "to ſhew that the Lord is up-"right; he is my rock, and there is no unrigh-"teouſneſs in him."

VII.

Teach me your language, ye miniſters of light, that I may expreſs my wonder and gratitude. O thou, who canſt explain the ſecret meaning of my ſoul, take the praiſe that human words cannot expreſs; accept theſe unutterable attempts to praiſe thee.

SIXTH WEEK.

I.

LET me go on, O Moſt Holy, to record thy faithfulneſs and truth: let it be engraven in the rock for ever: let it be impreſſed on my ſoul: and impoſſible to be effaced. What artifice of hell is it that ſo often tempts me to diſtruſt thee, and joins with my native depravity to queſtion thy truth?

II. Oh!

II.

Oh! may I never forget this remarkable preſervation; thy gentle hand ſupported me, and underneath were the everlaſting arms. "Thou "haſt kept all my bones, not one of them is "broken:" thy mercy upheld me even when it foreſaw my inſenſibility and ingratitude. How does my guilt heighten thy clemency? How wondrous is thy patience, O Lord, and thy rich grace, that only gently rebuked me when thou mighteſt have taken ſevere vengeance of my ſins?

III.

I muſt begin again the rehearſal of thy love. Thou haſt ceaſed my pain, ſcattered my fears, and lengthened out my days. Oh! may my being be devoted to thee: let it be for ſome remarkable ſervice that I am reſtored to health again.

IV.

I find thy mercies renewed with my fleeting days, and to rehearſe them ſhall be my glad employment. I truſted thee with my little affairs, and thou haſt condeſcended to give me ſucceſs. Lord, what is man, that thou doſt thus graciouſly regard him? Even my ſins, my hourly provocations, cannot put a check to the courſe of

of thy beneficence; it keeps on its conquering way againſt all the oppoſition of my ingratitude and unbelief; and haſt thou not promiſed, O Lord, it ſhall run parallel with my life, and meaſure out my days?

V.

Jeſus, my never-failing truſt, I called on thy name, and thou haſt fully anſwered my hopes: let thy praiſes dwell on my tongue, let me breathe thy name to the laſt ſpark of life. Thou haſt ſcattered my fears, and been gracious beyond all my hopes: my faint and doubting prayers have not been rejected; but oh! how ſlow are my returns of praiſe, how backward my acknowledgments!

VI.

Never have I truſted thee in vain; Lord, increaſe my faith; confirm it by a continued ſeries of thy bounty; add this favour to the reſt, for faith is the gift of God, an attainment above reaſon or nature. I am now waiting for the accompliſhment of a promiſe; O! ſhew me thy mercy and truth, add this one inſtance to the reſt, and for ever ſilence the ſuggeſtions of hell, and my own infidelity.

VII.

How rooted is this curſed principle of unbe-

lief, that can yet distrust thee after so many recorded instances of thy love? How long will it be ere my wavering soul shall entirely confide in thy salvation? Oh! my God, pity my weakness, give new vigour to my faith, and let me take up my rest in thee for ever.

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FINIS.